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ABSTRACT

Readily adaptable to classrooms, youth service organizations, and other groups that serve young people, the motivation activities in this book were set up for Reading is Fundamental projects and field tested by the organization's volunteers. Following an introduction to the characteristics of a good motivational activity and some guidelines for motivating teenagers to read, the chapters group the activities in the following categories: (1) themes and events, (2) involving celebrities and the community, (3) writing and research, (4) drama activities, (5) contests and games, (6) crafts, (7) book swaps, (8) easy activities, and (9) activities for the home. Most chapters have a separate section of activities especially for teenagers. (HTH)

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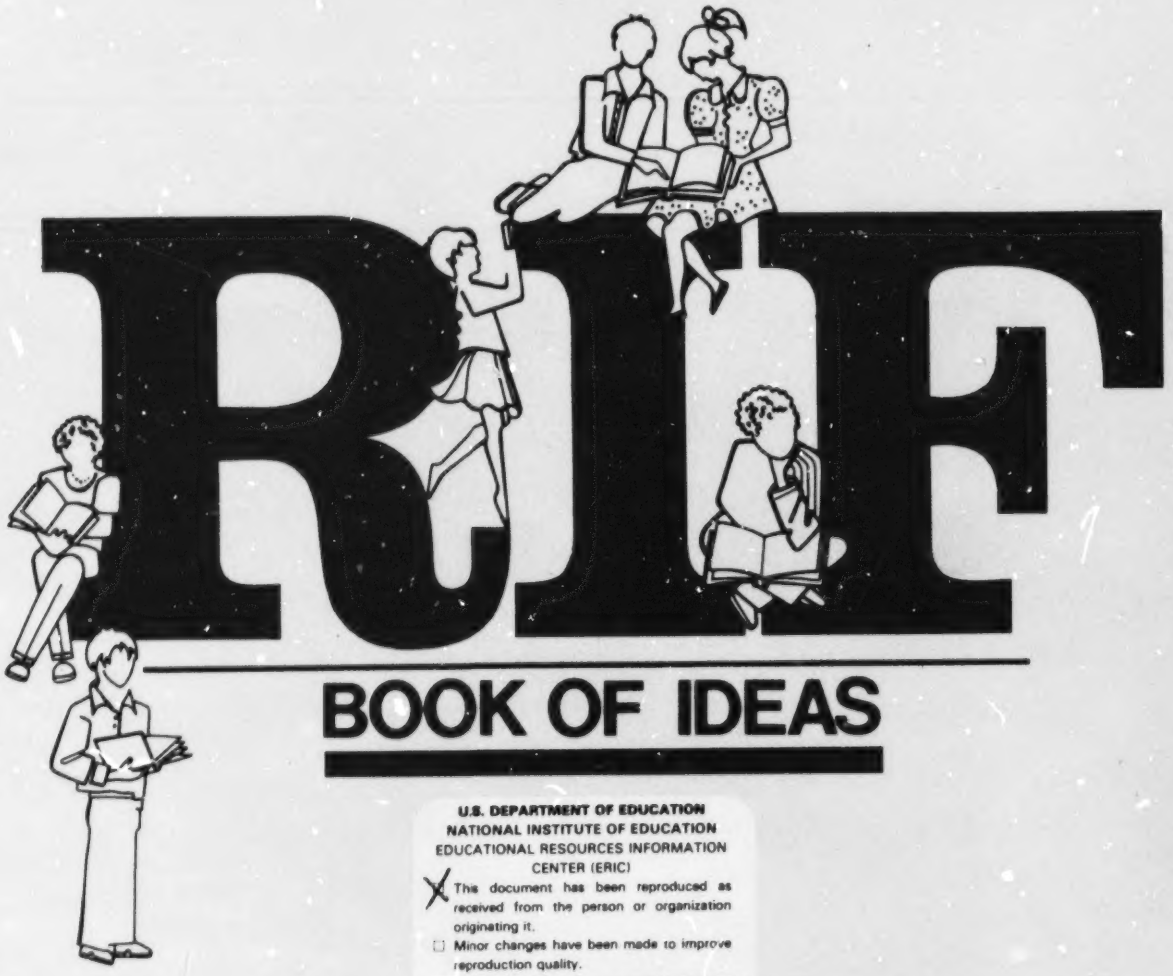

RIF

BOOK OF IDEAS

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ACTIVITIES TO MOTIVATE READING

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

CS007665

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Introduction

"Reading motivational activities release a kind of creative energy," said one Reading Is Fundamental volunteer, "that the whole school can tap. The geography teacher and the math teacher start teaching from a new angle. Suddenly the youngsters discover that learning can be fun."

"Fun," said another, "causes kids to do better in all their subjects. The name of the game is to motivate children—period."

"We create almost an athletic excitement for reading in our school," said a teacher. "And we allow every child to feel a part of that excitement. Books alone can't do that. Only *people* can do that."

Since 1966, Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)—a reading motivation program that operates on the grass roots level through a network of volunteers—has been exploring ways to motivate children to read. Some 117,000 citizens—from Alaska to Puerto Rico, from Guam to Maine—volunteer to engage youngsters in year-round book-related activities—all fun, and all designed to show that reading is both fun and fundamental.

These activities lead up to the "book distributions," when the youngsters may browse through a wide selection of books and choose, without adult interference, a book of their own. Throughout the course of a school year, a child will normally select no fewer than three books to keep.

To generate enthusiasm for learning and reading, Reading Is Fundamental projects devise reading motivation activities that are held before and after each book distribution. The activities described herein comprise a "cookbook" of the best of those reading motivation activities, all field tested by volunteers. Though the "recipes" included in this book were set up for Reading Is Fundamental projects, they are readily adaptable to classrooms, youth service organizations and other groups that serve youngsters.

What Characterizes a Good Motivational Activity?

In collecting model activities for this book, we sent out a call to our field contact people to tell us about activities that had worked to motivate reading. We were deluged with responses.

We also selected a small number of project directors who run some of the most outstanding reading motivation programs to answer a second question: what are the distinguishing characteristics of a great motivational activity? Are there any common themes that run through the activities listed here?

These consultants told us that there are. Though they represent projects in all sections of the country, in big cities, small towns and rural areas, they agreed on five characteristics of a successful motivational activity:

1. It should be fun. One principal commented, "Only those who have seen sparkles in children's eyes and heard excitement in their voices when they receive their books can appreciate the Reading Is Fundamental program."

2. It should help kids feel good about themselves. Some of these activities involve competition. Yet it cannot be stressed strongly enough that in a motivational activity, no one should ever feel like a loser. Always make sure to recognize the contributions of every child.

3. It should involve the home. Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Any really successful long-term reading project will involve the home, as well as the school, library or club where the project operates.

Elsewhere in this book, a consultant tells of the number of parents who come out on a hot summer night to watch their children receive a photocopied certificate for reading. That's a signal of the impact reading motivation programs can have on entire families.

4. It should help youngsters explore their own interests. By relating reading to everyday experiences, motivation programs can help students see that learning is a life-long process. Reading can help them meet their own goals, both in their professional life and their leisure hours.

5. It should challenge and excite children. One volunteer says, "Children are hungry for stimulating ideas presented in challenging ways." Reading motivation programs and book events can often add to that excitement.

Some Guidelines for Motivating Teenagers to Read

When planning motivational activities for teenagers, keep in mind the special needs of adolescents. Some guidelines:

1. Adolescents want to be accepted by their peers. To draw reluctant readers into motivational activities, predicate winning on the level of class participation. Most adolescents will join in so they don't leave their classmates in the lurch.

2. Adolescents want to be treated as adults. Err on the side of activities that are responsible and mature, and avoid any that seem in the least bit babyish. Select prizes that are attuned to teenage interests: a prized record album, a ticket to an important game or theatre events, or an autographed possession of a celebrity.

3. Adolescents are exploring career options. Whenever possible, bring a visitor who can explore career opportunities while stressing the importance of wide-ranging reading in the success of any career. (See Chapter 2.)

Photo by Rick Reinhard

4. Enroll adolescents in planning the logistics of motivational activities. Adolescents can often play an important role in setting up reading motivational activities for their own classes as well as for younger children. (See Chapter 2.)

For your convenience, we have grouped activities suitable for teenagers at the end of each chapter. Activities adaptable to both elementary students and teenagers are marked with an asterisk in the expanded table of contents for each chapter.

Acknowledgements:

Our thanks to the hundreds of Reading Is Fundamental projects that submitted ideas for this book, with particular thanks to the project directors who served as consultants: Dr. Ann Freeman, Ms. Betty Nichols, Ms. Jan Leik, Dr. Junny D. Smith, Ms. Patricia Reynolds, Ms. Beth Pettit, Ms. Irene Leonardi, Ms. Peggy Foote, Ms. Ann Erickson, Ms. Laurie Sherburne, Mrs. Pat Reese, Dr. David C. Abbott, Sister Margaret Shea, Mr. Ray Willard, Ms. Penny Hirschman, and Ms. Heidi Hogan.

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1 Themes and Happenings

*Reading Week or Month
Balloon Launch
Parade
Pep Rally
Reading Fair
Reading Is a Circus
Blast-Off for Reading
Let's Have a Book-nic
Reading Is Treasure
*Voices from Our Past
Celebrate Your State
*Where Are Your Roots?
Schools Have Roots
Reading Round Table
Reading Round Up
Books Are Like Wheels
All Aboard the Reading Railroad
Sail Into Reading
Follow the Yellow Brick Road
Around the World in 80 Books
A-Thons
BEAR Day
*Hobby Time
Halloween
Christmas
St. Valentine's Day
Feasts, Festivals and Celebrations
Hats on for Reading
Mascot

Especially for Teenagers

Reading Is a Hit
Reading through the Ages
Vote for Books
*Renaissance Fair
*Happy Days
Animals/Pets
College Life

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

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In an age of electronic media, when children and parents are all too often passive viewers of great events, there is much to be said for an activity that fosters active participation—and adds a touch of "showbiz." Many of the activities in this chapter involve the community in the promotion of reading. To be successful, they require time and planning.

Though originally developed for use with Reading Is Fundamental book distributions, these special book events are easily adaptable to library field trips, book fairs, and any other activity that introduces children to literature.

***Reading Week or Month**

Your mayor, governor, state or local superintendent of education may be willing to designate a time for special book events to celebrate reading. In Mitchell, South Dakota, for instance, the entire town got involved in Reading Month.

In the Mitchell schools, teachers and students brainstormed to develop a calendar of reading activities for each day of Reading Month. Some prescribed tasks were serious: "write a letter to your favorite author." Others were merely for fun: "read a dumb poem." Many called for cooperation: "perform a choral reading," or "read a book to a little kid." Teachers set aside time for the students to complete their reading activities and helped them coordinate the special projects.

"But we wanted to involve the entire town, not just school people," says Mitchell RIF coordinator Ray Willard. And they did. During Baby Book Week, for example, every baby born in Mitchell received a free book. Every restaurant table in town sported a table tent telling parents what they could do to promote reading in their homes. (Willard warns that you'd better print plenty of these, since interested parents kept taking them home.) And on one day, everyone in Mitchell was encouraged to stop what they were doing and read for 15 minutes. The local radio station cooperated by broadcasting a story, read by the mayor, on the air.

Staging a special event of this kind is a great way to build support for reading within your community.

Balloon Launch

Each year hundreds of RIF projects across the country launch helium-filled balloons with attached notes listing each child's name and favorite book, and requesting the finder to write back about his favorite book.

The Statesville, North Carolina, schools decided to make their balloon launch a really special day and selected the theme "Reading Gives You a High." Before the distribution, a local hot-air balloonist brought a beautiful balloon to the school playground. All the students watched as the balloon was tethered and inflated. Then the school principal and "RIF Man," a volunteer, entered the balloon and took a short ride. When the balloon returned to earth, "RIF Man" stepped out carrying a sack of books that had been secretly placed in the balloon before the launch.

Reading Month

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Read to your foot	Share a sign you read on the way to school	Choral Reading	Read a dumb poem	Make a book marker	
	Pin/Button Day	Interview an adult about a favorite book	Share a book	T-shirt Day	Comic Book Day	
	Write a reading song	Play charades with a book title	Write a letter to your favorite author	Read a label or box and share (cereal and etc.)	Make a poster advertising a book	
	Read a book to a little kid	Listen to someone younger read to you	Prepare a T.V. commercial to sell your book	Design a book cover		

Parade
Have a book character parade through the center of town. Include the student body, interested supporters and organizations. The band, pep squad, and cheerleaders can lead the way. Students costumed as their favorite book character can carry signs advertising their favorite book and hand out leaflets about a book event to be held in the evening for the community. After the parade, serve refreshments and award prizes for the best costumes.

Pep Rally: Book Cheers and Songs
Hold a pep rally and invite a local celebrity to talk about the importance of reading. Then have some reading cheers and songs.

In one school, each class was assigned to make up a reading cheer about their favorite book, author, or about several books by one author. Songs are alsc great for building enthusiasm. To be successful, the song should be short and easily learned, and have a well-known melody. You can encourage the class to write a book song to share with the entire school.

Reading Fair
Everyone in a school—principal, cooks, janitors, classrooms—can put up book displays. In one school, some classrooms made dioramas of books they read, one classroom made a storybook town, and the second grade made a three-foot-tall alphabet book to donate to the kindergarten room. After all displays were up, each classroom took a tour of the building. The youngsters' favorite? The custodians' display: they had hung various cleaning bottles from the ceiling and then put up a sign reading "Custodians *Must* Read, Too." Following the tours, the whole school attended a RIF book distribution.

Reading Is a Circus

Several Reading Is Fundamental projects have used a circus theme to demonstrate to children that reading is the ticket to three rings of fun. In one school, older children had studied the detail in circus posters, then had chosen a famous circus character and learned about his or her life. In another school, a costumed ringmaster visited each classroom to give students a ticket.

Rooms were decorated with crepe paper streamers to resemble a big top. Attendants were dressed as clowns. The "three rings" were round tables filled with books. Children also had a chance to visit the "midway"—an area of simple game booths at which every child could win a small prize. After choosing their books, youngsters curled up with a bag of popcorn for a few minutes and read.

Blast-Off for Reading
For a book event featuring space age books, a "Space Invader" (someone dressed in a silver sauna suit and exotic headgear) can announce that the books are coming, and escort groups to the book event. Post a large photo of the space shuttle and the inscription "Days to Blastoff." On book event day, decorate the room with moon photographs, NASA photos of the earth,* and a cardboard space capsule. Everyone can dress up as an imaginary space creature.

Let's Have a Book-nic
Everybody loves a picnic. And for a nice spring day, what could be more appealing than a chance to read a great book and enjoy the weather? Rope off an area outside with carnival flags and spread lots of blankets. Volunteer readers can sit on the blankets and read to small groups of students. Refreshments are popsicles, of course. After hearing stories and singing some camp songs, students can move to the book displays—lots of picnic baskets labelled "Adventure," "Puzzles," "Animals," etc. Be sure to have picnic baskets brought to the picnic site a day or two early—some people will inevitably forget. Some projects have combined this activity with a real picnic—on a field day or for a last-day special treat.

* The National Air and Space Museum has black-and-white study prints of aircraft and spacecraft available for use in schools. As of this writing, there is no charge for these prints. Contact:
Coordinator/Curriculum and Instruction
Educational Services Division
Room P-700
National Air and Space Museum
Washington, D.C. 20560

Colored posters of the space shuttle Columbia, the moon, and other space-related photographs are available for sale. To obtain a catalogue listing available materials and prices, write to:
Sales Catalogue
National Air and Space Museum
P.O. Box 2244
Washington, D.C. 20013

Reading Is Treasure
A pirate arrives to announce that buried treasure is hidden nearby and delivers maps (to record how many books the children read or how much time they spend reading at home). One project gave each youngster a gold nugget (gravel spray-painted gold) for each book read. On distribution day, students can be given eye patches to wear and taken to dig for treasure. Books are displayed in treasure chests, and helpers dress as pirates. One project made a large key for each room (each one painted a different color), cut the key into three parts, and hid the parts throughout the school. Students were given clues about where to find the keys. When each classroom had a key to fit together, they were able to unlock a treasure chest filled with books.

***Voices from Our Past—A Local History Celebration**
To celebrate the centennial of the settling of their valley, the Trout Lake, Washington, RIF program sponsored an oral history project. Community citizens were encouraged to lend everyday items from a century ago—candleholders, tools, books, kitchen implements—to the school for a display. Maps and pictures of early buildings in the valley were also available.

Adults researched the history of the valley and learned several stories about the earliest settlers. They visited each classroom and told the children one or more of these true stories. Then the younger (K–4) children selected their favorite stories and illustrated them. The older (grades 5–8) made a time line of significant events in the valley; the younger children's pictures were used as illustrations.

On distribution day, an assembly featured many of the oldest citizens in the community who shared their reminiscences with the children. Volunteers for the event dressed as they might have 100 years ago.

Coordinator Lauri Sherburne reports that youngsters were fascinated to learn about their grandparents' everyday lives as children. Moreover, the entire community gained a real appreciation for the struggles of the early settlers—and a chance to reflect on how much it owed them.

Celebrate Your State
One school in Kansas combined a book event with Kansas Day. To set the mood, students were invited to come to school in costumes representing Kansas, and the rooms were filled with sunflowers, the state flower, and other Kansas symbols made by the students. The nearby Indian Center Museum sent an Indian storyteller who kept 600 children spellbound for 30 minutes. The Kansas Secretary of State furnished a free souvenir booklet about Kansas for each student. A special day celebrating your state would provide a wonderful opportunity to teach children the state song, the state nickname and its origins, and other special facts about your state.

***Where Are Your Roots?**
We are a nation of immigrants. But many children may not be aware of the traditions and customs of their countries of origin. Students in the South Strafford, Vermont, RIF project were asked to find out from parents the countries of their ancestors. On a huge world map made by the fifth- and sixth-graders, the students then placed a colored dot (a different color for each grade) on their country of ancestry. Surrounding the map were oaktag posters for each country; students listed their name under the country of national origin. Both youngsters and parents were fascinated to see who else came from "their" country.

Books from RIF and Sister Cities International are presented to Oakland City Councilman Frank Ogawa to be taken to Oakland's Sister City School in Fukuoka, Japan.

First- and second-graders researched traditional costumes of their ancestral home and colored paper dolls; these were strung together and mounted in the lunchroom with a poster that read "Children of the World Smile in the Same Language." Third- and fourth-graders researched and made national flags for every nation; these were also mounted in the lunchroom.

Seventh- and eighth-graders made travel posters inviting children to visit "their" country. Librarians noticed an increased demand for reference books and books on other countries.

Families told RIF coordinator Pat Reynolds that they spent more time than they ever had digging into their family's history, researching and trying special dishes from their homeland, and even making costumes related to their native dress.

In this case, a RIF book distribution, featuring books about other countries and books from other lands, concluded the day. The small Vermont town found that its citizens represent over 30 countries, including Japan, Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and Africa.

Schools Have Roots
Schools are much more than rows of desks and cinder-block hallways. Schools have roots. And for children who think the school has always been there, or who think the principal sleeps in the school at night because he or she owns the place, researching the school's history could be an enlightment.

Interview former teachers and alumni: Is this the original building? When was the school opened? How has a typical school day changed? Are there pictures or other written records that the children could see?

Have children ask their parents and grandparents the same kinds of questions about their own schooldays. Are there any schoolbooks or other memorabilia in the attic?

For a book event day, invite everyone to dress as they would have on some school day in the past. The principal can ring an old school bell to start the day. Conduct classes under turn-of-the century rules: straight

lines, boys and girls on opposite sides of the room, no talking, spelling bees (keep a sense of humor about all this and the children will have a great time). Youngsters might even volunteer to wear a "dunce cap."

Invite a famous alumnus to the assembly. Or have a sing-along of favorite old songs. (If you can stand the mess, an ice cream social would be a great conclusion to the day.)

Reading Round Table
Feature fairy tales about knights in shining armor. Have the students enter the room through a castle moat (made from an appliance box). Decorate with coats of arms and illustrations of favorite fairy tales. If someone in your group is particularly artistic, there could even be a dragon in one corner. A fairy princess can lead children to the area, and a coat of arms can embellish each display table of books.

Reading Roundup
Children will enjoy a taste of the Old West when western attire is the required apparel on book event day. At one school the books were delivered by a convoy of covered wagons. At another, an old prospector joined the distribution, equipped with a pickaxe and leading a mule with books strapped to its back.

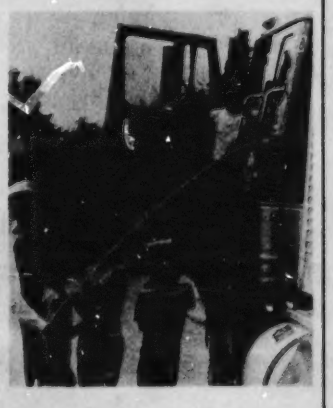
Lunch can be a "cowboy meal"—perhaps served outside. Younger children can have a stick-horse relay. Celebrity guests could include a rodeo clown, an equestrian unit dressed in traditional western clothes, or a local square dancing group. Children can be brought to the book event by "ranch hands" who "rope a class" (by bringing a long rope that each child is asked to hold). Bales of hay can add atmosphere. A western band can provide music.

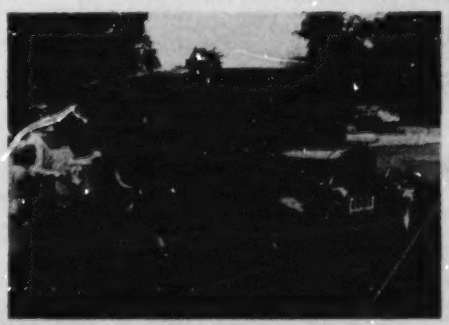
Two off duty firemen and their hook and ladder firetruck hoisted a "Reach New Heights in Reading" banner 100 feet in the air to proclaim book distribution day in York, Pennsylvania, at the Hannah Penn Middle School.

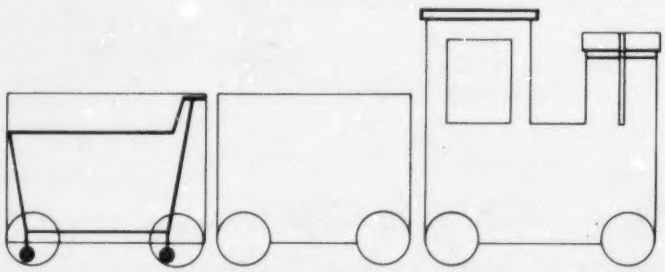
Books Are Like Wheels
The Statesville, North Carolina, RIF project used a transportation theme "Books Are Like Wheels—They'll Take You Anywhere You Want to Go," as a motivational theme for a book distribution. Posters featuring various modes of transportation announced the day. One poster included hundreds of magazine photographs of wheels arranged to spell out the book distribution slogan.

On distribution day, an 18-wheel truck, a large van, two motorcycles, a new Oldsmobile, and a 1931 wooden school bus were parked in the school lot. The children inspected all the vehicles at close range and looked out over the display from the high cab of the truck. Of course, reports coordinator Betty Nichols, books about "wheels" were the most popular at this distribution.

Youngsters in Statesville, North Carolina, explore a 1931 wooden school bus, and then look out over a display of vehicles from the high cab of a truck.







All Aboard the Reading Railroad
Announce the coming book event by playing a tape or a record of a train. Set up a ticket booth outside the area. Books can be displayed on tables labelled, for example, "Hobby Town" or "Mystery City," and students can have their ticket stamped as they "reach their destination" (select their book). Those helping with the book event can wear engineer caps and red bandannas.

One project carried the train theme a step farther and based their railroad distribution on the story "The Little Engine That Could." The coordinator visited each classroom and read the children the story, changing the text to read that the "little train was delivering books to the good boys and girls at West School." On book event day, books were delivered by a real little engine—wheeled carts covered by plywood cutouts of railroad cars constructed by parents. Afterwards, children sang such railroad songs as "I've Been Workin' on the Railroad" and "Casey Jones."

Sail into Reading
The slogan for this book event could be "Readers Have Smooth Sailing." Children enter the area by walking up a gangplank. Decorate with fishnets and other boating equipment. Types of books can be identified by large tagboard sails above each table.

A rowboat in a corner could provide an inviting place to read. Helpers can dress in sailor costumes, and children can decorate a boat with the name of their book.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road
For a Wizard of Oz theme, some RIF projects have hung long strips of yellow paper to represent the yellow brick road, and then taped cut-outs of the children's footprints (each with the name of the child and a favorite book) to the yellow brick road—as though the children were going to a RIF book distribution.

In the RIF distribution site, a cardboard Wizard of Oz—made by parents or children—concealed a tape recording of the Wizard's voice telling about the RIF distribution. The distribution room was decorated with rainbows and large figures of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodman, and the Cowardly Lion.

Around the World in 80 Books
Even though youngsters can't just take off like Phileas Fogg, they can learn about the rest of the world through reading. Decorate the room with a large map of the world and travel posters picturing exotic locales. Display books about other countries, and connect them with a string to the country on the map. Helpers can dress in the native costumes of various nations and international foods can be served. As a follow-up activity, students can plan an imaginary around-the-world trip by selecting books to read about each event on the map. As they read a book about a country, they can attach a small flag with their name on it to the map.

A-Thons
In April, before the Boston Marathon, try a running theme such as "Reading Jogs the Mind." One school set up a marathon course (26 miles) and allowed students to move one mile for each book they read. Another school held a book event featuring the middle-school track coach, who pointed to the similarities between running and reading: runners need sturdy shoes, readers need good books; both runners and readers can set goals to achieve or can enjoy the activity just for fun; both runners and readers are

doing something just for themselves. Volunteers can wear jogging suits to the book event and the room can be decorated with pictures from sports magazines. Snacks can include oranges, a runner's favorite. After the book event you may want to take the youngsters outside and let them run!

Photo by Rick Reinhard

"Rocking for RIF" was the theme of a Read-A-Thon at one Ohio elementary school. Over a period of a week, four rocking chairs were occupied by some 300 readers, grades 1 to 5. The rocking and reading was followed by a RIF distribution.

A Kansas school library sponsored a reading marathon which lasted an entire school day—from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. "Students brought pillows" said the librarian, "some brought cushions, some brought sleeping bags and some just brought themselves and their stack of books." Places to read ranged from desks to the carpeted floor of the library. Students reading the longest in each grade were given recognition.

BEAR Day (Be Excited About Reading)
One Pennsylvania RIF project used activities about literary bears to set the scene for their book event. Children in the primary grades participated in a "Name the Bear" contest, identifying illustrations of five famous bears: Corduroy, Paddington, Bobby Bear, Winnie the Pooh, and Frances (really a badger). The first-grade children made teddy-bear cookies. Older children took a quiz about bears using the card catalogue and other sources in the library. On the day of the book event, students followed bear tracks to the distribution site, which was decorated with large teddy bears and a display of honeymaking, including a hive and other equipment. Younger children brought teddy bears to the classroom with the title of a favorite book or a favorite storybook character on them. Each student received a "Bit-O-Honey" candy bar, and students decorated cutout bears with the titles of their books.

***Hobby Time**
Before a book event, make displays featuring hobbies appropriate to the age group, e.g., "Reading Helps Kids Cook" and one or two cookbooks. On the day of the book event, invite several people from the community to bring displays of their hobbies. Youngsters can be invited to display their hobbies, too. Allow time for everyone to circulate among the displays. Parent helpers can be dressed appropriately for their hobby—in sports clothes, or with an apron and a chef's hat. And be sure to include someone whose hobby is reading!

Halloween
For many elementary school children, Halloween is the calendar's most eagerly awaited holiday. Schools capitalize on that excitement—in self defense, perhaps—by planning special events.

In Wrightwood, California, volunteers used the theme, "Reading Is No Trick, It's a Treat." Before their RIF book distribution, children were given large grocery bags and materials for making masks. Prizes—books—were offered for the best masks in each classroom.

The distribution room itself was decorated with ghosts made from sheets and with pumpkins and other Halloween decorations.

The books were displayed in a large coffin, built by the husband of RIF coordinator Penny Hirschman. Mothers who helped with the distribution dressed as witches.

During the entire event, appropriately eerie music was played and all the children wore their masks.

Here are some other ideas from RIF Halloween book distributions:

- If your group is very artistic and very committed, you might try building an entire haunted house. You'll need to set aside a large area for several days prior to the event and garb volunteers as witches and hobgoblins.
- Organize a costume parade and suggest that the children dress as book characters. Youngsters can even act as their character would act. Prizes, of course, can be books.
- Turn down the lights, play some spooky music, and read ghost stories or other scary tales before the book event.
- Try a pumpkin contest with a different twist—have youngsters decorate pumpkins (either real ones or paper cutouts) to look like their favorite storybook character.

Christmas

For a December book event, have the children:

- Build a sleigh of cardboard and load with books—perhaps decorated with a ribbon so they look like presents. Two older children dressed as elves can bring the sleigh to each room and read an appropriate story to the children before they choose their books.
- Construct a large Christmas tree bulletin board. Have the children write: "If I were giving my favorite book as a present, I would give _____ because _____." Decorate these stories and put them on the tree as ornaments or under the tree as presents.
- Write poems and copy them onto paper ornaments they have designed and colored.

St. Valentine's Day

- Organize a book event around the theme "I Love Books," and declare the day "I Love to Read Day." Refreshments can be heart-shaped cookies. Decorations can be large book covers with hearts mounted on them.
- Have youngsters write valentines to their favorite book characters. Or have them write a valentine their favorite book character might send.

Feasts, Festivals, and Celebrations

Have the young people research and enact the holiday traditions of other lands. Some examples:

- Chinese New Year
- Brazilian Carnival
- The national independence day of Mexico or the national holidays of the Central American countries.

Hats on for Reading

This book event theme could also be called "Reading Doesn't Get to Be Old Hat." Wear and display hats of all kinds. Give prizes (an extra book) for the prettiest hat, the funniest hat, the best hat about a book character, and so on. Be sure to bring some extra hats so everyone will have one to wear. The day before the book event have special visitors and staff members wear hats and announce the event. Feature such books as *The Cat in the Hat* and *The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins.*

Photo by Randy Kalisek Courtesy of the *Idahodian*

Photo by Ed Baggett
Courtesy *News Journal*

Mascot
Invent a book mascot. It might be a wizard, who appears at distributions in a black graduation gown with sparkly hat and magic wand, pulling a paper rabbit out of a hat. Or it could be a bookworm, a handmade sock puppet. The bookworm can change his attire for different occasions: a mask on Halloween, a pilgrim's hat on Thanksgiving, a top hat and scarf for cold weather. Before each distribution, children can change the Bookworm's hat to one appropriate for the season. Other common mascots include: your school's nickname, such as "The Tigers." (Try making a reading tiger.) A "Readasaurus" (see "Make Tracks," Chapter 5).

Especially for Teenagers

Reading Is a Hit!

If your book event takes place during the World Series, why not try a baseball theme? Before the event, posters can encourage youngsters to "Catch a Good Book" (a large catcher's mitt holding several books). On the day of the book event, everyone can wear some sort of sports uniform—even youngsters who aren't on teams have sweatshirts and sneakers. (Bring some extra hats for those who forget.) Arrange books around the "infield," with mysteries on first base, jokes and riddles on second, and so on. And for refreshments—well, what would a baseball game be without peanuts and popcorn?

Students can decorate the room with pennants about their RIF books. Afterwards, make a scorecard for participants so students can record the books they read by placing a baseball—really a round sticker with seams drawn in—after their name for each book they read. To turn the event into a competition, count each book read as a base hit, and see which group makes the most runs during an allotted period.

Reading through the Ages
To emphasize how important reading has been through the ages, make your book event part of a living museum. Ask volunteers to lend antiques and to demonstrate such traditional crafts as candlemaking, weaving, spinning, quilting, tinsmithing, and basketmaking. A member of the local historical society could talk about how your community has changed through the years. Youngsters can visit each craftsperson, then go to the book event. Assistants can dress in costumes appropriate to other eras.

Vote for Books
For a November book event, have youngsters nominate their favorite books. (School classes could take this opportunity to practice public speaking: "I nominate this book because . . .") Lists can be compiled and posted; youngsters could even launch campaigns for their favorite books. Finally, everyone can vote. (Since different books appeal to various age groups, it's probably a good idea to come up with a top 10 list rather than a single winner.) On book event day, everyone could wear red, white and blue, and the room could be decorated with bunting, flags, and campaign memorabilia. Each student could make and wear a reading button. You might even invite some local elected officials to visit the distribution to talk about reading. For older groups, this activity would be an excellent way to begin a study of modern American campaign techniques.

***Renaissance Fair**
As a followup to a school-wide project on the Middle Ages, one school held a Renaissance Fair. Students and faculty dressed in period costumes. Activities included plays, wandering minstrels, and other forms of entertainment popular during the period. The feast even featured a roast suckling pig!

***Happy Days**
Have a "Happy Days" book event with everyone dressed in the style of the 1950's. If possible, the week before the distribution, have parent volunteers set up a 1950's bulletin board with photographs, news items, and 1950's yearbooks of your school (or other local schools if yours is a new one). Students will particularly enjoy the bulletin board if they can find pictures of their parents participating in athletics, band, chorus, and so on. The cafeteria can carry out the theme by offering a menu of the food featured at the "Fonz's" favorite hang-out, "Arnolds." A "Fonz" look-a-like contest can follow the book selection.

***Animals/Pets**
Invite a veterinarian or a member of a local Humane Society to talk to young people about caring for animals, and to bring some animals with them if possible. Feature books on animals at your RIF distribution or other book event and conclude with a pet parade. (If the school or host facility won't permit animals on the premises, try a parade of stuffed animals.) Give lots of awards so that every youngster's pet can win something—pet with the longest ears, curliest tail, loudest bark, etc.

Photo Courtesy of *Winchester Evening Star*

Not your average canine, the large furry creature is a timber wolf named Slick. John Harris, author of *The Endangered Species*, brought Slick to a RIF distribution in Winchester, Virginia.

College Life
Try holding a book event on the campus of a local university. The university's public relations or admissions department will undoubtedly be delighted to assist your group by providing space, speakers about the university, and students to talk about campus life. In return, you could encourage young people and their parents to spend some time exploring the campus.

Reaching Out: 2 Involving Celebrities and the Community

Celebrity Readers
*Celebrity Assembly
*Celebrity Auction
Rock and Read
Reading Convoy
Volunteer Readers
Parents As Volunteer Readers
Bigfoot
Dial a Story

Especially for Teenagers

Older Youngsters
Professional and Amateur Athletes
Career Representatives
Foreign Student
Performing Artists
Visual Artist
Media Representative
Children's Authors or Illustrators
Teleconferencing
Parachutist
Band
Paper Airplane Contest

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

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One strategy for getting youngsters into reading is to invite a celebrity or someone from the community to a book event. These visitors can testify on how important reading is to success on the job, or they can simply read or tell stories. Either way, the impact on the students is greater than parents or teachers can have.

The following are some ideas from Reading Is Fundamental projects on involving communities in the youngsters' reading.

Celebrity Readers

Photo courtesy *The Evening Times*, Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Norman Bridwell, author of *Clifford, The Big Red Dog*, reads from one of the stories in the series about Clifford's hi-jinks.

The West Harlem, New York City, RIF project uses celebrities to impress upon children that reading is important. For special assemblies during the school year and every day during a summer reading program, special guests are invited to read to the children.

Guests have included such people as Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn, jazz performer Dizzie Gillespie, as well as ministers, doctors, congressmen, and local people who just want to read to the children. Popular teachers make good guests. All guests are introduced as famous people, and the children are told about their lives and their accomplishments. Whether or not the celebrity guest has been in the news lately, says Beth Pettit, coordinator, "When we finish our introduction, that person is very well known and very important to the children."

Guests read at least one story to the children and then discuss it with them. They also talk about their favorite books and the importance of reading in their lives. Children are always given the chance to ask questions, and guests frequently stay to mingle informally with the young people.

The celebrity readers have an impact not only on the youngsters' interest in reading but also on what they choose to read. After New York City Council Chairman Carol Bellamy mentioned that *Alice in Wonderland* was her favorite book, many children checked it out. Bowie Kuhn motivated a similar interest in Shakespeare.

***Celebrity Assembly**

During Black History Month, one Pine Bluff, Arkansas, school invited community leaders to participate in a special assembly honoring black citizens. The assembly opened with an actress portraying a mother speaking to her children. She told the children of the new worlds they could encounter by reading books, and how reading could help them as they grew up. Next appeared black community leaders: a city alderman, a state representative, a federal judge, a professional football player, an insurance agent, a police officer, a fireman, a caterer, and a disc jockey—who told the students that they could be anything they wanted to be. The speakers also discussed how reading had influenced their own choice of careers.

The children—largely minority youngsters—were captivated, reports coordinator Pat Reese. Afterwards, there was an upsurge of interest in books about careers, and books that could help the youngsters "when they grew up."

***Celebrity Auction**

A celebrity needn't appear in person to promote reading. At Beckwith School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, the youngsters wrote to celebrities asking them to donate something to an auction. These items—ranging from an NBC beach towel donated by Fred Silverman to an autographed Bob Newhart album to a lunch with the superintendent of schools—became prizes in a celebrity auction.

Pupils received points for the number of books they read outside the classroom: five points for reading a book below their reading level, 10 points for reading a book at or above their reading level, and 15 points

for reading a book and then doing a project (writing a report, drawing a picture, or making an oral presentation). A record was kept of the points so they could be used later to bid for prizes.

Coordinator Jan Leik reports that not many students chose the projects. They quickly figured out that it was more beneficial to read two books for 20 points than to do one project for 15 points; if you're interested in encouraging projects, you might adjust the point totals accordingly.

During the five months of the project, most students were awarded over 100 points. On auction day, a teacher served as auctioneer and the youngsters used their accumulated points to bid for the prizes. The highest bid was for the chance to spend a day as assistant to the principal!

Because one of the youngsters had written to a local newspaper columnist asking him to be a celebrity participant, the auction received excellent local news coverage.

Rock and Read

Old people and young people are often drawn to each other: a 40-year age gap is sometimes easier to bridge than a 20-year gap. To find volunteers for your RIF program contact the local chapter of the National Association of Retired Persons, the National Retired Teachers Association, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, the Older School Volunteer Network of the National School Volunteer Program, or a local retirement home. Schedule regular times each month when retired citizens can read to and with the children or have the children read to them. (If the older citizens can't get to the school, arrange for youngsters to visit them at a retirement home. The children can perform for the residents and the senior citizens in turn can read and tell stories to the youngsters.)

The Wrightwood, California, RIF project ran ads in church bulletins inviting older citizens to volunteer for one morning of reading to children. Volunteers were mailed a letter (see below) suggesting appropriate reading for the age group.

On the day of the reading, many of the storytellers came dressed in bonnets or long "granny" dresses. Each was furnished with a rocking chair. Children sat on area rugs or carpet squares. Students listened to the readers for 15 minutes, chatted with the readers, then chose their book. Tables were decorated with small rocking chairs made from clothes pins holding a small book.

The youngsters loved being read to. The retired volunteers loved reading. As a result of the "Rock and Read" project, many retirees have continued to volunteer their time to the school.

Photo courtesy *The Era-Leader*

Sample Letter to Volunteers

Thank you for offering to read at our April 2 book event. The theme is "Rock 'n Read." The event will be held in _____ Room from 9:00–11:00 A.M.

Students will be coming to the event on a half-hour schedule. One or two classes will arrive together and be divided among our readers (in rocking chairs, of course).

You will be reading with the following age children: _____

Your selection(s) should total 15 minutes in length. Attached are some poems that can fill in—or you can simply enjoy talking with the students. After you have read to the students, they will be dismissed to choose a free paperback book for personal ownership. They may wish to return to your area to sit and browse through their book—or share it with you!

We are offering you some books only as resources. You may choose any story or selection you feel would be enjoyed by the children.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call _____

Reading Convoy

In one Pennsylvania RIF project, teachers discovered that many students wanted to be truck drivers, but believed reading was unimportant for that career. So with help from parents, the project located nine drivers—eight men who drove a tractor trailer, a Peter-built, a garbage truck, a sewage disposal truck, a horse trailer, an electric company truck, a telephone truck, and a dump truck, and one woman whose truck sported a C.B. radio.

Drivers talked about how important reading was in their jobs and then demonstrated their equipment at the playground: the electric company truck driver sent the cherrypicker sky-high, the dump truck driver showed the maps he needed to get around, and the woman truck driver called other truckers on her C.B. and used C.B. lingo.

Youngsters wanted to learn more about the C.B. slang, and the variety of truck models. Of course, books about trucks became especially popular. Afterwards, the school sent photos and the students' thank-you letters to each trucker.

Volunteer Readers

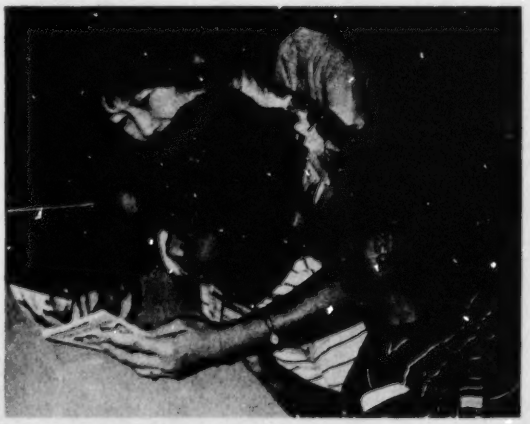
In Dallas, Texas, volunteers from a local church work with third-graders once each week. Groups of 15 children come to the RIF reading room each half-hour to work with five volunteers; each volunteer works with only three or four children. Everyone—children and volunteers—wears a name tag.

Sometimes volunteers read a book to the group of students. They make a special point of reading such favorites as *Amelia Bedelia* and *Clifford the Big Red Dog*. Volunteers encourage the children to ask questions and discuss the stories they have heard. Since the groups are small, every child has a chance to share in the discussion and to see the pictures in the book.

Photo by Rick Reinhard

Sometimes the children choose a story to read. The volunteer secures enough copies for the entire group, and the children take turns reading aloud. RIF coordinator Ann Freeman emphasizes that this is *not* another reading class (though it would be a good way to teach reading occasionally). There is no pressure to "do it right," reading errors are ignored, and children frequently help each other with difficult words. As a result, youngsters feel free to ask questions and make predictions about the story, and reading becomes "a thoroughly delightful activity."

Parents as Volunteer Readers



During Reading Week and Children's Book Week one school invites parent volunteers to come to the school clad as favorite book characters and to read excerpts from these books to small groups of students. The program has several benefits: students are excited about their parents coming to school; parents are excited about sharing their love of reading and their favorite books with students; students want to read the books that have been read to them; and parents want to return to the school to read again. Such a program can foster a better reading atmosphere in the school, the home, and the community.

Bigfoot
The RIF project in a Michigan school used the theme "Bigfoot" after local newspapers reported sightings of the creature. Bigfoot, his wife "Bertha," and their baby, a teddy bear in a basket, visited each classroom and joined the students when they chose their books. (Bib overalls, sun-bonnet and apron were added to gorilla costumes to create a very believable couple.) Each child received a fur bookmark as a memento and a footprint-shaped bookplate was glued into each book. Large footprints led to the distribution room. Dozens of monster books, movies, and filmstrips were made available to classroom teachers to develop the theme.

Dial-a-Story
Check with your local telephone company about installing a pre-recorded story line for a special event, such as Reading Month. Change the story daily, and be sure to keep track of the number of calls. In one community, there were more calls to the line than there were citizens in the community.

Especially for Teenagers

Older Youngsters
Teenagers are excellent resources—not only as readers and story tellers, but as backup volunteers involved in reading projects. The scarcity of volunteers in areas where both parents work has prompted some communities to call on their teenagers not only to put in appearances at book events but to organize them as well. While adult volunteers handle supervisory and administrative matters, the teenagers can plan and stage story hours, craft demonstrations, field trips and other activities for young children.

High school youngsters can read or stage activities for elementary schools, and college students can put in appearances at high school book events. (Cross-age partnerships like these work best if there is a minimum two-year age difference between participants.)

Photo by J. D. Schwalm

Teenage teamwork can effectively galvanize community support through bake sales, car washes, craft sales, or other special events. Older youngsters can also:
- Help with publicity for book events by designing and distributing posters, writing press releases, and corresponding with parents and local media.
- Decorate rooms for book events.
- Prepare refreshments—perhaps demonstrating to the children how to read and work from a recipe.
- Set up record playing equipment and select suitable music for book events.
- Conduct surveys among children to assess the impact of reading activities.

Professional and Amateur Athletes
One school invited members of the local professional soccer team to an assembly, where they demonstrated their soccer skills and told the students how they read for leisure (in hotel rooms, during flights to games, waiting in airports, etc.).

A professional football player told another group of children of the importance of reading in his job: reading playbooks, of course, but also reading the fine print in his contract.

Reading pep talks and a demonstration of basketball training and practice skills by team members and the coach of a nearby university basketball team highlighted another RIF distribution. When reading and education were emphasized by a seven-foot center, a six-foot-eight-inch forward, and a popular coach, these skills took on new importance.

Career Representatives
To show how important reading is to all work, invite representatives from a wide range of jobs—carpenter, lawyer, banker, baker, writer, signpainter, engineer, seamstress, police officer. Be sure to invite some people with nontraditional jobs, such as a male nurse or a woman firefighter. Have available an ample supply of books about jobs and encourage the children to write stories about what it would be like to be a carpenter, lawyer. . . . (This project could be a good way to initiate cooperation with a local service club.)

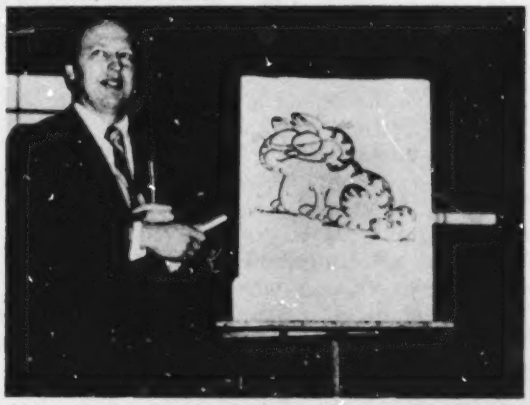
Foreign Student
Ask a foreign student to describe his or her country to the RIF group, touching on the educational system and the availability of books. See if you can find a book about the student's country (let him or her read it before the session) and invite the student to comment on the accuracy of its description (a good lesson in critical reading).

Performing Artists
Many artists plan programs specifically for children. Your local arts council may advise you of some of these excellent performers, and may be able to help support their visit to your school. (See "Visiting Thespians" in Chapter 4.)

Visual Artist
Ask an artist to attend a book event and to sketch pictures of the children selecting books, individual portraits, and fanciful cartoons or book themes.

Media Representative
Arrange to have a local television or radio station representative visit the school to talk about how important reading is in preparing a broadcast. As a follow-up activity, organize a tour of the local television or radio station. This would be a good opportunity for youngsters to learn about media-associated careers.

Photo courtesy *The Mail-Journal*



Cartooning for the amusement of children in RIF projects are Jim Davis, creator and patient caretaker of the gluttonous cat, Garfield, in the Lakeland Community Schools in Syracuse, Indiana, and Ed Koren, who draws hairy and bemused beast-people for the *New Yorker* magazine, in the Brookfield, Vermont, Elementary School.

Children's Authors or Illustrators
Invite an author or illustrator to visit the group and describe how a book is created. Since some writers and illustrators charge lecture fees for each visit, you might consider staging this event with the library, a service organization, a community center or theater, a bookstore, or the English or education department of a local college.

Teleconferencing
If celebrities are unable to come to your school, explore using the telephone as a communication medium. For example, students in one Wisconsin high school enjoyed an hour's telephone conversation with authors Vera and Bill Cleaver. Through the use of an education teleconference network that connects schools in three Wisconsin counties, students asked interpretive questions about many of the books the husband and

wife team have written. To follow up, the entire student body saw the film, "Where the Lilies Bloom," based on the Cleavers' book of the same title.

Parachutist
Let surprise visitors fall from the sky into a field on book event day. Arrange for a parachutist to explain free-fall jumping. Be sure there is a good supply of aviation and parachute books: you'll need them. Check a local military base, a jump club, or the (N)ROTC unit at a local college to find some willing jumpers.

Band
Invite a local band—or even symphony musicians or folk singers—to serenade a book event. Good sources: military bands, college and high school bands, symphonies, jazz and folk music nightclubs, musicians' unions, amateur local groups. As a finale to a year of reading motivation activities, one group invited a handbell choir, "the Tintinnabulators," to play for the children. In preparation for the program, students were introduced to Edgar Allen Poe's poem, "The Bells," from which the choir chose its name. The performance demonstrated the importance of reading not only words but also music.

Paper Airplane Contest
One school invited a local radio personality to fly his traffic helicopter to the schoolground and speak to the students about the importance of reading in his life. He told them that in order to learn to fly, he had read more books than he could fit into his helicopter. Afterwards, students attended a distribution, visited the jetcopter, and conducted their own paper airplane contest from the second story of the school. If you sponsor a similar day, be sure to have books on flight and airplanes available.

3 Kids are Authors, Too—Writing and Researching

Writing

*Young Authors' Day
Writing about Reading
Variations on the Book Review
*Writing Contests
Group Poetry
Chain Story
What Happened after It Ended
*Mystery Stories
Room Four's Fables
All about Me
Our Big Book of . . . .
Beyond Dick and Jane
*How-To Book
Scrapbooks
Joke Book
Cartoons
Fantasizing from Pictures
Picture Book
Illustrated Stories (suitable for hearing impaired children)
Alphabet Books
Monster Soup
*You Are Invited
*Thank You Letters
*Letters to Famous People

Researching

*Can You Find Your Way Around The Library?
*Book Hunt
*Question of the Week
Happy Birthday to . . .
The Expert Room
Information Capsules

Especially for Teenagers

Writing

*Roving Reporter
Newsletter
Reading Journals

Researching

Travel with Books
Where Do Words Come From?
Time Line

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

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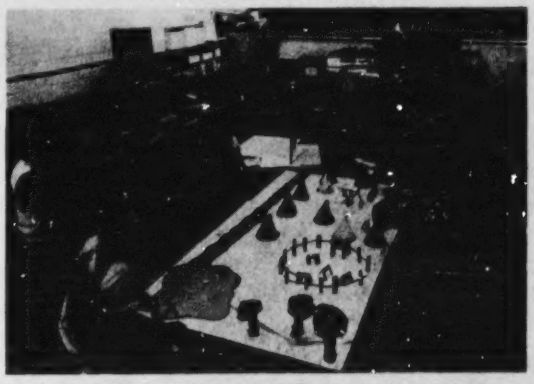
Writing

***Young Authors' Day**
Encouraging youngsters to write their own books can motivate them to read books written by others. At St. Stephen's Indian School in Wyoming, the day-long Young Authors' Celebration is one of the year's highlights.

As Young Authors' Day comes near, the students—who are encouraged throughout the year to write and read other students' writing—are asked to prepare a book for publication. Like any author, they can choose their genre—poetry, short stories, essays, or a longer piece of fiction. They can also bind their book in a variety of styles. But by Young Authors' Day, each student has some writing that he or she can share with others.

The day requires meticulous organization. Three small-group workshops—conducted by parents, teachers and volunteers with special skills—relate reading to the youngsters' everyday activities. For example, students may first read about horsemanship, then take a trail ride. They may read a recipe and then make nutritious snacks.

The day also includes activities for the entire school: one year, an Arapahoe Indian storyteller shared the oral history of his people; another year, a small group of puppeteers entertained; a third year, films were shown.



Students at St. Stephen's Indian School in Wyoming participate in workshop during Young Author's Day.

While Sister Margaret Shea, RIF coordinator, says that the day "is only limited by the creativity and effort people are willing to invest in students," there are two constants. First, every student has a chance to share his or her book with another student. Generally, two classes get together and students pair off for an exchange of books. The second constant is a book event followed by some quiet time for reading.

The day's activities are preserved in several ways. Students act as recorders in each session, and produce a newspaper commemorating the day. And all the student books are donated to the library. In this way, the students get a sense of the permanence and continuity of the written word, and they are encouraged to keep reading.

Writing about Reading
Have students write creative stories relating to the topic of reading. For example: "What I remember about learning to read," "What kind of books creatures read in outer space," "A story a snake would write if he could," "The character I've read about who is most like me." Other variations:

- Letters to Book Characters: Have each child write a letter to a character without divulging the character's name. Post the letters on a bulletin board and let children guess the names.
- What If? After the children complete a book, ask them to speculate a bit. What if the setting were changed—how would the story change? What if the story began differently? What if it ended differently?
- The Day I Was a Book Character: Ask youngsters to write a story, poem or play about how they think it would be to spend one day as a character in a book. Display all entries, or bind them into books.
- Fantastic Fun Reading Book: Have each student complete the sentence, "Reading is fantastic because . . . " and illustrate their answers. Compile the pages into a class book.

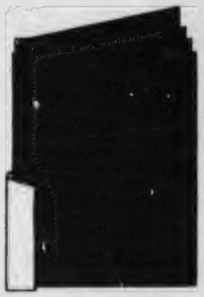
Variations on the Book Review

- **Book Report In a Bag:** Have the children write book reports, and reprint each sentence from their reports on a strip of paper, one sentence per strip. On plain paper bags, the children then write the book title and author, draw pictures to illustrate the stories, and enclose their sentence strips. Have the

Book Making!

Sample	Cover	Binding	Type	Decorative devices
	construction paper contact paper over cardboard posterboard	Pages folded accordion style. Stapled or glued to covers.	**Accordion Book** poems patterns sequence stories	• marbelizing art effects • photographs • shapes, triangles, squares, circles, etc. • tie-dye paper
	thin plywood 3/16" wood sheets balsam woodburning sets	Drill hole in cover. Use key chain or notebook ring to bind together.	**Plank Book** poems patterns stories "How to" directions	• newspaper cutouts • ink sketches • splattered paint • broken crayon drawings • corrugated cardboard pictures
	cardboard covered with contact paper	Staple pages together. Glue to cover.	**Contact Books** poems collections group stories individual stories	• type stories on pages • type stories, cut out and paste on pages. • create art impressions with dropped candle wax and food coloring. • potato prints • etchings • art materials, straws, buttons, etc.
	cloth drymount cardboard need: iron, scissors, needles, thread	Pages folded and sewn down center. Attached to cover with drymount.	**Bound Cloth Book** poems collections of poems stories which have been edited and prepared for printing	• photographs • ink sketches • splattered paint

Book Making!

Sample	Cover	Binding	Type	Decorative devices
	construction paper posterboard cardboard	Pages and cover are stapled together, then bound for added durability with mystik or masking tape.	**Staple Books** classroom stories group contributions alphabet books word fun poems simple sequence stories	• use expressive printing • paste cutouts and magazine pictures on pages
	construction paper posterboard cardboard try burlap, too	Punch holes in pages and use notebook rings or shower curtain rings to bind together	**Ring Books** group stories word fun poems collection of poems	• type poems or stories, cut out and paste in box; illustrate with crayon chalk and water, magic markers, poster paints, fingerpaints
	construction paper posterboard cardboard (cover is in shape of object.)	Make pages in the shape of your book—long, tall, like people, animals, things, etc. Bind together with staples and masking tape, or try lacing with yarn	**Shape Books** stories about animals, objects machines, people, etc. poems nursery rhymes innovations	• crumple and paste colored tissue paper • use string and yarn • material, fabrics with various textures • wallpapor cutouts
	construction paper posterboard cardboard (cover is in shape of object)	Make pages in the shape of your book: tall book, short book, triangles, circles etc. Bind together.	Poems stories about different objects	• combine various art media on same page, such as fingerpaint and construction paper, etc.

students select a bag other than their own, read the enclosed report strips and attempt to put them in correct sequence. The author of the "bagged report" can then check to see if the report has been correctly reassembled.

- **Foot Reports:** Have children write book reports on paper cut in the shape of a foot. Students can include the title of the book, the author's name, and a short paragraph about the book. Each student should sign his or her name to the foot. The reports can be "walked" down the hall or around the room.
- **Our Favorite Characters:** Divide an 8½ by 11 inch sheet of paper in half. On the left side, have children draw a picture of their favorite character. On the right side, have them write a story about the character. Bind the entire group's stories into a book for display.
- **Diary:** Have each child write a diary for a character in a book he or she has chosen, extending the life of the character for at least three days.
- **Book Review Chart:** Make a chart of books displayed at each book distribution and leave space for students to rate them and write comments. Leave room for several readers to comment, and emphasize that reasonable readers can differ.

***Writing Contests**
Stage writing contests on book themes. Examples might include "The Greatest Book on Earth" (tied to a circus distribution theme), a mystery contest (perhaps near Halloween), or "The Book Character I'd Most Like to Meet." Hold the contest with appropriate hoopla—perhaps a local celebrity panel to judge entries—and don't overlook the contest's publicity value. Be sure, however, that every child's entry is appreciated; give a personalized award of some sort to every contestant.

Group Poetry
Have one child write the first line of a poem. The second child reads the first line, then adds a second line, folds over the first line, and hands it to the third child. The third child again composes a line of poetry, folds over the previous line, and so on. Each person sees only the immediately previous line of poetry. Read aloud or have a student read aloud. This activity can introduce the group to poetry—where the next line should always be the *only* line that could have followed.

Chain Story
A variation on group poetry is the chain story. Ask each youngster to add a link to the story with a character description or plot development. It is also fun to record these stories on tape and play them back to children or their parents.

What Happened after It Ended
One group of first graders composed a sequel to *Peter Rabbit,* with each child illustrating a page. The book was laminated and is in circulation. The idea would work for many well-loved books.

***Mystery Stories**
One North Carolina RIF project encouraged gifted children to write suspense stories for elementary school children, omitting the solution. A panel selected the best two stories and taped them, complete with sound effects. When children expressed dismay at the abrupt endings, RIF volunteers encouraged them to write their own conclusions. Later, the authors of the winning stories visited classrooms so students could meet them.

Room Four's Fables
After hearing their teachers read many of Aesop's Fables, one classroom composed "Room Four's Fables," complete with a moral at the end. They then worked as a group to illustrate their compositions. Older children might enjoy reading some of Thurber's modern-day fables and writing their own humorous tales.

All about Me
Have kids write books all about themselves—their families, their friends, their rooms, their favorite places. Other pages could be headlined, "I wish . . . " "What I like best," "What I hate," "My favorite foods," etc. Include time lines with all the important events in their lives. The last page of each book could be an imaginary time line showing what they'd like to have happen in the future.

Our Big Book Of . . .
Display several books on a single topic. Topics could include: the solar system, trees, animals, a particular country, etc. Ask students to read the books with an eye toward learning one fact about the subject. Then give everyone sheets of posterboard on which to record and illustrate their facts. Use a hole punch and large metal rings to assemble these sheets into a book.

Beyond Dick and Jane
Show the youngsters some old-fashioned Dick and Jane readers, and ask them to improve on them. Encourage them to write and illustrate the kind of book they would like to read, or that they think their younger brothers and sisters would like.

"How-To" Books
Ask students to think about something they've become an expert in—are they great on roller skates? Did they teach their old dog some new tricks? Can they make great cookies? Have them tell "how to" in a book.

Scrapbooks
Have the children write their own poems, jingles, limericks, and even riddles. Make scrapbooks of their writings to use when introducing your program to parents or others in the community.

Joke Book
Have individuals or groups make books of favorite jokes. Illustrate each joke or page of jokes.

Cartoons
After reading a story, have the children represent it in comic-book style, with cartoon figures carrying out the action in panels. If they prove adept, let them author and illustrate their own adventures in comic strip format.

Fantasizing from Pictures
Show the youngsters a picture, or group of pictures, and then let them spin a yarn from the illustration. They can tell the stories to one another or write them. Bring in a variety of magazines with appealing photos, have the children select one, and write a story about what happened before, during and after the time the picture was made.

Or bring in an old-fashioned book of fairy tales or a science fiction book cover.

Picture Book
Take pictures of scenes around your school. Have the children write stories about the photographs.

Illustrated Stories
This activity has been successfully used to teach language to hearing impaired children at the Katzenbach School for the Deaf, but it would work equally well with other children. On the blackboard, tape a large piece of paper divided into four sections. Show the children four short sentences that can be combined to make a story (initially, you may wish to present them in sequence; older children could be asked to put them in sequence themselves). Have a child tape the first sentence to the first section of the paper; then invite several children to produce a picture to illustrate the sentence. Continue this procedure for the remaining pictures. Cut the four pieces apart, place them in order, number the pages, and add a front and back cover.

Now you have a new book for your class library. The Katzenbach School RIF coordinator, Irene Leonardi, reports that the books quickly became dog-eared, but the children demanded that they be repaired often. Here is one example of an illustrated story:

1. John walked outside one day.
   (There should be outside scenery such as trees, clouds, the sun, etc. John is a boy and should look like one.)
2. He found a dime on the ground.
3. He bought a balloon. (From whom did he buy it?)
4. The balloon flew away!
   (The balloon should be the same color as in #3.)

Alphabet Books
Show very young children a number of alphabet books. Have them create and illustrate their own.

Monster Soup
Monsters and dinosaurs seem to hold an endless fascination for young children. The Iola-Scandinavia, Wisconsin, RIF project capitalized on their interest by having the youngsters write a "Monster Soup."

Following a week of reading stories about monsters, making monster puppets, and dressing up like monsters, students were assembled to make a large batch of "Monster Soup." Parent volunteers helped them prepare a simple vegetable soup, but the students were responsible for translating the everyday ingredients into monster talk. Thus one cup of carrots became one cup of monster eyes, and a dash of salt was specified "for ugliness." Coordinator Peggy Foote suggests that another alternative would be to have the children write recipes for *making* a monster. The recipes were bound into a book and displayed for students and parents. (You could get the cafeteria to cooperate during this week by serving such dishes as "Ghoulish Goulash.")

***You Are Invited**
Let youngsters design and produce invitations to reading events, fundraisers, and other special activities. Let them also take responsibility for addressing and mailing the invitations and recording responses.

***Thank-You Letters**
The thank-you letter is an often repeated activity, but it never fails to touch the recipient and teach children the pleasure of gratitude. Have the children send original thank-you letters—not copies of form letters—to sponsors, volunteers, contributors, teachers, principals, visitors, or others who have helped with your activities.

***Letters to Famous People**
Similarly, you might have the young people write letters to their heroes—sports figures, television and movie stars, politicians, or whomever. Don't use a form letter, as that spoils the effect, and the children are far more likely to get a response to an original message. Ask the children to talk about their favorite books. They might ask their heroes what their favorite books are. Any responses could be posted to share with everyone.

Many students write to the authors of books they have enjoyed. Be aware, however, that not all authors want to receive letters from children. Alert your students not to be discouraged if they do not receive replies.

Researching

Every good non-fiction writer knows that at least two thirds of his time is spent in researching the subject. So along with writing activities, we've included here some of the research activities that RIF projects use to strengthen this skill, and to acquaint youngsters with the library information systems.

***Can You Find Your Way around the Library?**
At the beginning of the school year, take students to the library and give them a worksheet-maze that directs them to find several stations. Once they have found the station (reference shelves, nonfiction, fiction, biography areas, etc.), give the students materials and tasks to complete. Make some of these just for fun—and encourage teachers to take the quiz with their classes. This worksheet will give librarians and teachers a good idea of how much students already know about the library.

***Book Hunt**
Have the librarian list several books—mystery book, animal book, etc. Using the card catalogue and the Dewey Decimal system, the students can have a "scavenger hunt" for the books. The first student to find the books wins a prize—usually a book.

***Question of the Week**
Once a week during the morning announcements, ask a question that requires students to use reference books. For example, how many baseball pitchers have won 300 games? Or what state has a unicameral legislature? Give a prize—often a free book—to the first 25 (more or less) correct answers.

Happy Birthday To . . .
Everyone loves a birthday party—so why not sponsor one all year? In Iola-Scandinavia, Wisconsin, RIF coordinator Peggy Foote made a large cardboard birthday cake display for the library. She labelled it "Happy Birthday to these September Birthdays," and displayed books by authors and illustrators with September birthdays. (Children seemed especially thrilled if they could see pictures of favorite authors.) She made a special point to include some Wisconsin authors.

During the month, students researched the "birthday authors" by using such reference works as biographical dictionaries, encyclopedias, book jackets, the *Something About the Author* series, and the pamphlet file containing information from publishers, articles from professional magazines, and so on. They shared this information in book talks and reports.

On their own birthdays, students received a special birthday present—a wrapped book. Many students rushed into the library at the beginning of their birth month to see if an author shared their birthdays. Several children discovered new authors in this way. And all month, the featured authors' works were in great demand.

Foote says that the most important thing she learned from this activity is that "children enjoy and, in some respects, need a personal touch to motivate their reading—even if it is as simple as sharing a birthdate with a famous person."

Expert Room

Photo by Hick Reinhard

Have the class select a topic on which they wish to become experts (dinosaurs, space, sea life, the Civil War, etc.). Students can research information on the topic and bring the information to class for review. Let each child select a subtopic on which he or she can become an expert. Then have the child make a placard that reads "Ask Me About . . . " Other classes can be invited to visit and view the materials on display and to quiz the students on their field of specialty. The door to the room should be appropriately decorated, saying "Experts on ____ Live Here."

Information Capsules

Develop a list of topics (some samples are listed below) and list each topic on a separate index card. Lay the cards face-down on a table. Have youngsters draw a topic (or draw three, but choose one). Then begin a library search to find new and interesting information on these topics. Record the information on heavy paper or oak tag (which you can dub "information capsules"). Cut the "capsule" in the shape of something appropriate for the topic (e.g., a Sherlock Holmes capsule could be in the shape of a hat). Then place the capsules on display for other students.
Sample topics might include:

Chewing Gum
Grand Canyon
Straight/Curly Hair
Human Heart
Ostriches
Great Wall of China
Gravity
Sun
Gold
Mushrooms
Hearing
Mark Twain
Poison Ivy
Coal
Great Salt Lake
Yellowstone National Park
Your Lungs
Camels
Sherlock Holmes
Prehistoric Man
Wild Ponies of Assateague

Especially for Teenagers

***Roving Reporter**

Ask a newspaper reporter to explain to the students how he or she writes a story. Then have students write their own reports, interviewing other students or parents about a subject of current interest. Afterwards, ask the reporter back to help judge the stories. Perhaps the reporter can persuade the newspaper's editors to publish the winning story; if so, you will have won some publicity.

Youngsters can compile their own book of interviews with outstanding community figures. Have the children set up appointments, prepare questions, and take careful notes of the answers. The interviews can be illustrated with drawings of photographs, and bound.

When celebrities come to speak to the children about the importance of reading, make sure your roving reporters preserve their words. A tape recorder or videotape equipment—if available—is useful for recording the actual presentation. Transcriptions can become a part of your archives for children to enjoy in future years.

Newsletter
Many RIF programs have newsletters that youngsters write, design, and produce. These include first-person accounts from children who have learned to like reading or to read better through RIF. Other popular features include "reader of the month," "volunteer of the month," book reviews, or descriptions of book distributions.

Don't overlook the newsletter's potential as a tool to generate publicity and support; be sure to distribute it to all parents, sponsors, potential supporters. Make sure school officials get copies, too.

If a newsletter is not feasible, students can write stories on book activities for the school newspaper, the local paper or the PTA news. Bring an easy-shoot camera to distributions and let budding photographers take pictures to go with the stories.

Youngsters can also prepare a regular column about books for the school newspaper. Occasionally a teacher could contribute a column on favorite books.

Reading Journals
Have the students keep reading journals. After the first book event, have a journal writing period in which everyone recaptures on paper the events of the day. Later they can record their reactions to the book. The journal can be kept throughout the year, and youngsters can be encouraged—though not required—to read selections to the group. For teenagers who are good readers, a much more sophisticated reading journal might be very effective. This is a good opportunity to introduce youngsters to some journals by famous people as well—for example, Thoreau's *Walden, The Journals of Lewis and Clark, Pepys' Diary, Travels of Marco Polo* and the numerous Presidential memoirs.

Travel with Books
Have students read about an area they would like to visit. (For variety, you could cut up a map—either U.S. or world—and have kids draw a destination out of a paper bag.) After they have learned about their locale, they can complete the following activities:
- Make a travel poster giving information on climate, location, and interesting attractions.
- Tape record a commercial enticing others to visit.
- Determine the best way to travel to the locale (maps or travel agents would be particularly helpful here).

Youngsters could be encouraged to write letters to obtain additional information—to a state department of tourism, or to a country's embassy. They should keep a record of all the sources they use in making their presentations.

Where Do Words Come From?
Children can discover how words are derived by tracing, with the help of an etymological dictionary, the development of common words: try "banjo," for instance. If they traced "banjo," the young people would learn that the word originated with the Greek "pandoura," a three-stringed musical instrument. In Latin, the word became "pandura," and in Spanish, "bandurria." The English word was originally "bandore," meaning an instrument that resembled the lute or the guitar. The young people (and you) may find etymologizing addictive; it is a particularly good activity for some of the more advanced readers.

Time Line
Have students read a book of their choice dealing with any period in U.S. history. Biographies and accounts of a particular historical event are best. Then have the group make a time line of significant historical events illustrated with pictures of characters from that period. Students will have to share their information before they can construct the time line: "I found that in 1848 gold was discovered in Sutter's Fort, California. What did you have happening around that date?"

The Play's 4 the Thing

Beginning Dramatization Activities
Books Come Alive
Storybook Parade
Book Previews
Books on Tape
Theme Poetry
*Chalk Talk
Dance a Story
TV Tie-In

Especially for Teenagers

Bio-day
Make a Movie
*Readers' Theatre
Visiting Thespians
Storytelling

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

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Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland made it look so easy. A good idea, a couple of talented kids, a few weeks' rehearsal, and they produced a Broadway show.

Recognizing the powerful links between reading and theater, many creative teachers, librarians, and volunteers have tried to use dramatization to enhance children's understanding of books. Often they succeed. But sometimes they don't, and both teachers and students are frustrated by a sense of what could have happened, but didn't.

The problem may be in thinking too big. A full scale production is one of the *last* steps to take with younger children. There are many small-scale dramatic activities that can inspire children to empathize with book characters—and perhaps learn a few things about themselves, too.

Beginning Dramatization Activities

1. Introduce a story to the children by making it as exciting as possible. Don't just read it—show pictures or play a recording of sound effects as an accompaniment. But rivet the youngsters' attention and conjure up visions.
2. In the beginning—and this may be several sessions—have every person in the group participate in the same action at the same time. This includes the leader.
3. Start with pantomime. Select any action from the story and have the whole group act it out at the same time: "Now we're going to pretend we're Peter Rabbit getting dressed in his new clothes. Let's put them on one piece at a time. No words at all. Ready?"
4. Emphasize to the children that they should be *showing* the action, not telling: "Now let's pretend we're Goldilocks eating the three bowls of porridge—how can we *show* which one is too hot? Remember—no words."
5. Only after the children are comfortable at this level of activity—and it may be several weeks—should any dialogue be added. Start by dividing the youngsters into small groups. Have every group act out the same scene at the same time. After they have played the scene, have them talk about what they did. Here is where you could begin to lead them to "performing": "Group 3 was doing some very interesting things. Will you show us?"
6. Keep the emphasis on what the children do well.

Moving on to a Play

If you want to put on a play with children, you should still begin with the six steps listed above. After you sense that things are going well, and *only then*, suggest the possibility of putting on a play for others. Get the children's ideas—they will often give you a great start.

Have the youngsters work up several small scenes, as in #5, above. Then gradually put two or more scenes together into a longer scene.

You'll need to develop a script. For very young children, you will probably only want to develop an outline and stay mainly with improvisation. With grades 4 and up, let the children be the playwrights, perhaps in groups working on individual scenes. Remind them to keep the play true to the book.

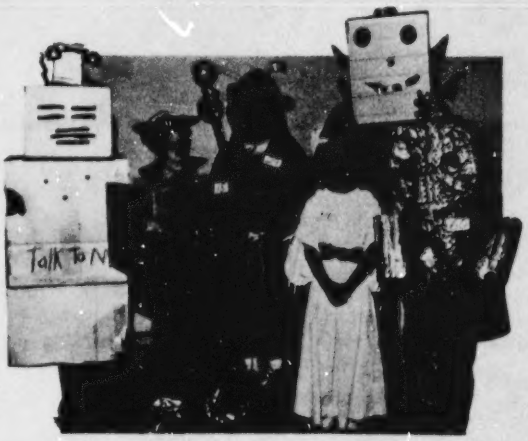
At first all children can play every part; later you'll need to think about casting and assigning other jobs, such as painting and designing scenery, gathering props and costumes, assisting the director, writing the program, making posters, working backstage, ushering, and providing sound and music. It is essential to include everyone.

Allow enough time for rehearsal so the children won't forget, but not so long that they lose their enjoyment for the project. Finally, think about adding a set and costumes. The cardinal rule here is *KEEP IT SIMPLE*. (This is one place where you can't always trust the students' instincts—they are fascinated with all technical and theatrical production elements.)

Finally, when the audience has arrived (whether it's another class or the entire PTA) and the play has begun, remember that the performance is now out of your hands. Relax

and enjoy the show and allow the children to learn responsibility by handling things themselves.[1]

Books Come Alive
To make a story come alive, have students put themselves in the place of the character in the book. One class did it this way: to get



the feel of *The Wizard of Oz*, a second-grade class constructed a life-size scarecrow out of straw. And how could one know the feeling of Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web* without actually washing a live pig in buttermilk in a washtub on the school lawn, as did one second-grade class? After whitewashing a fence and walking barefoot in man-made mud, one group had a better understanding of *Tom Sawyer.*

A real treasure hunt, including pirates, was the undertaking of a sixth-grade who read *Treasure Island*. Fifth-graders who read *The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* staged a frog race.

Storybook Parade
Create book costumes with boxes decorated to represent books. Cut arm and head holes, fit each child into his or her box, and make up the faces with theatrical paint. Then hold a storybook parade.

Or have the students dress up as their favorite storybook characters. In one RIF school in Grand Rapids, Michigan, coordinator Jan Leik reports that "as you walked around the school, it was like all the books truly came alive. The kids had done an outstanding job of researching their characters and had spent considerable effort on making even the smallest details authentic."

Book Previews
Have each class present a book (one which will be available later that day) in an assembly for the whole school. The presentation could be a dramatization of a scene from the book, with youngsters dressed as characters. Or it could include a choral reading, telling riddles, doing dances, etc. Or children can create book commercials—short skits that advertise their books.

Book talks are also a way to introduce children to titles that will be available at upcoming events. The point of the talk is to tell just enough about the book to pique the children's interest. When relating the plot, don't give away the ending; tell the story just to a critical point—then stop.

The intercom can be used for these book talks. Try a "preview of coming attractions." A few days before the books will be available have a teacher, the principal, a parent, or a student read exciting passages or enticing chapter headings from some of these books. Be sure to have several copies of the books on hand, because many students can't wait to find the books they've heard "advertised."

Have children present a book the way a television preview is offered. Set a time limit and allow each person to tape-record his or her book preview in private. Remind youngsters that the title must be repeated several times, and an exciting or appealing part of the story should be explained.

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[1] This section was adapted from an unpublished paper, "Library Theatre: A Developmental Approach for the Classroom Teacher," by Carole C. Huggins, Washington, D.C.
Other excellent resources for creative dramatics and children's drama:
Siks, Geraldine, *Creative Dramatics: An Art for Children*. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.
———. *Drama With Children*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
Spolin, Viola, *Improvisation for the Theatre*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963.
Ward, Winifred, *Playmaking With Children*. New York: Appleton, 1957.
Gillies, Emily, *Creative Dramatics for All Children*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1973.

Give children the chance to compare their reading and delivery skills by keeping on file their readings. For a child who lacks confidence, it might be a real boost to compare the first and last tapes of the year.

Books on Tape
For some learning disabled students, having a tape recording of a book might be a way to enable them to enjoy reading with their classmates. One nonprofit organization that tape records elementary, secondary, and career education books onto c-60 cassette tapes publishes a catalogue of their current offerings. For information and a catalogue, contact

Mrs. Angela Donahue
Media Coordinator, Franklin County
Special Education Co-op
Box 440
Union, Missouri 63084

As of this writing, there is a charge of $1.00 for the catalogue plus $1.50 for postage and handling.

Theme Poetry
Have the group memorize and recite poems that complement the theme of your book event. If the theme is medieval knights and ladies, for example, the children might learn a passage from an Old English bard's tale (learning to pronounce the Old English would be fun in itself).

***Chalk Talk**
The chalk talk is another old and much loved way to tell a story. As the plot progresses, the storyteller illustrates it with bright chalk. For a variation, ask children in the audience to come forward to illustrate scenes. Again, it is a suitable activity for teenagers to provide for young children.

Dance a Story
Let the youngsters interpret a story by dancing the action and the way it makes them feel. You may use the opportunity to explain something of the importance of dance in our own and other cultures, as well as some of the characteristics of ballet and modern dance.

TV Tie-in
Books and television can enhance one another. Whenever a television program becomes popular with children—*Little House on the Prairie, Pippi Longstocking, Charlotte's Web,* the book that inspired it enjoys a corresponding popularity with youngsters. Try to find tie-ins with other popular shows—for example, books about heroes for children whose favorite program is *The Greatest American Hero.*

Especially for Teenagers

Bio-Day
Have students select a person they would be interested in reading about—either a historical character or a contemporary. Then have them read a biography of that person. On Bio-Day, every student can come to school dressed as his or her character and can present a brief oral report about the character's life (in the first person, of course) to the class.

Make A Movie
Have the students make a movie, staging and filming the narrative with an 8-mm camera. Print the narration and dialogue on cards. Have plenty of how-to books on hand that explain the different roles of producers, directors, actors and engineers. Hold a gala showing for parents, supporters, or others involved with your project.

***Readers' Theatre**
Reader's theatre allows a small group of performers to play many parts. Parts are rehearsed but not memorized; no costumes or props are used. Readers' voices and expressions, rather than props, project the action portrayed in the literature. Children can make sound effects, read the narration, description and dialogue. (Older youngsters or volunteers can perform readers' theatre selections for children, too.)

These productions can be taped and edited. A local station may even be willing to air them on the radio. Choose a story that has a lot of sound effects—for example, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Telltale Heart" would work well.

Photo by Ed Baggett, courtesy of *News Journal*.

Teachers dressed to portray the rowdy children in the book, *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, which was enacted for the children of Osceola Elementary School in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Visiting Thespians

Invite a local drama group from a high school or college, or a professional children's theatre company, to present a performance based on well-known children's stories. Sometimes the performers become so interested in the book event that they participate in that as well. And after one performance of a reading taken from the books of Judy Blume and Lois Duncan, every book by the two authors was checked out of the library within two days. For a listing of professional children's theatre companies, you might order the *Directory of Children's Theatre in the United States*, available (for $9.00 as of this writing) from the American Theatre Association, 100 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Storytelling

Have older children learn some of the basic principles of storytelling. (There have been several good books published recently; ask your children's librarian to recommend one.) Then have them select a book for younger children that is easily retold (again, your children's librarian will be an invaluable resource). Tell the children to practice several times—twice to a mirror, twice to a family member, twice to a classmate, and once to a teacher.

When the students have mastered their delivery style, set up appointments for them to visit and share their stories with the young children. Encourage the use of simple props and rudimentary costume suggestions (such as a large square of cloth that can be a cape, an apron, or a kerchief).

If you want to invite a professional storyteller to attend your distribution, get in touch with the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling. Their *National Directory of Storytellers* can be ordered (for $6.95 as of this writing) from P.O. Box 112, Jonesborough, Texas 37659.

Photo by J. D. Schwalm, courtesy of *The Register Mail*.

5 Contests and Games

Reading Awards
*Reading Olympics
Progress Markers
*Supershooters
Make Tracks
*Beat the Principal
Catch Me Reading
Secret Codes
Book Report Picture Grid
Book Puns
**Magazine Sentence Strips
Jigsaw Puzzles
Game Corner
Scrabble Squares
Can You Guess Your Teacher's Favorite Book?
Team Word Jumbles
Character Riddles
Treasure Hunt
Inventory
Rebus
Question-in-the-Egg
Similarity

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

**Especially suited to hearing-impaired children.

Especially for Teenagers

Reading Raffle
Debates
Book Battle
Best Book
Poster Contest
Billboard Contest
Reading Tickets
Hall of Fame
Best Seller List
Graduate Board

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"It amazes us that construction paper, ditto pictures, colored markers, and glitter can be so important to our students. But it is! And when you add their name, that's even better," says Wylene Hudson, referring to the reading prizes she devises as reading specialist in the Skiatook, Oklahoma, RIF project. "Though it seems a very simple activity, it is a successful form of motivation."

Many youngsters like to compete for prizes in reading just as they do in athletics. Some projects hold school wide assemblies, invite the parents and honor the winners of intra-class reading competitions. Children who read 5, 10, 15, or 25 books are given certificates. Several programs even invest in attractive engraved trophies to award to students who read an exceptional number of books.

Several of the panelists who reviewed the manuscript for this booklet, wary of contests in which any child could be labelled a loser, suggested that schools sponsor only competitions that award every child. To minimize individual failure, one elementary school principal suggested that youngsters compete as teams.

Another panelist recommended that awards be based on time spent reading, rather than on the number of pages or the number of books read. This practice would make it profitable for children to tackle challenging books, and also encourage slow readers.

Reading Awards

When Beth Pettit arrives at the West Harlem RIF project at 7:15 A.M.—the program officially begins at 9:00 A.M.—the youngsters are waiting on the front steps of the library. This West Harlem summer reading program makes a point of seeing that each child's accomplishment is rewarded. And it is set up so that children can not only read books, but have the opportunity to discuss them with adults as well.

The books for the summer program are roughly divided into three categories—according to whether they will appeal to the youngest, middle or oldest children. So that books can be re-shelved correctly, volunteers tag them with strips of paper color-coded to age group. Then they are stored in milk cartons and placed in an area reserved for that age group.

So that children won't be stigmatized by reading books on lower reading levels, each area contains a range of reading levels. A six-year-old can find a challenging book in the boxes for young children, while a fourth-grader with reading difficulties can still find an interesting book on a primary reading level in the books for older children. In this way, older children aren't embarrassed by being sent to read the "baby books."

As the children arrive in the morning, they pick up index cards listing their name, address, and age, which they take to a counselor who will be working with them in a small group. Then they go to the "library"

Photo courtesy of The Smithsonian Institution.

of milk crates, choose a book, and find a comfortable spot to read. After completing the books, they summarize them to a counselor who asks follow-up questions. When satisfied that the children have completed and comprehended the books, the counselor records the titles on the index cards.

Children can earn extra points by reading long or challenging books. Since some non-readers are enrolled, older children can also receive points by reading a book to a younger non-reader.

At the end of the summer, the program holds a graduation ceremony. All children receive certificates to indicate the number of books they have read. Parents who have never been on the school's premises attend these graduation ceremonies. Some parents frame the certificates and hang them on the wall.

Many of the participating children who have received no special tutoring in reading during the summer show significant gains on standardized reading tests in the fall—even though during the summer they read books below their grade level. Pettit says she is convinced that children who read *more* read *better*, even if they read many easy books.

***Reading Olympics**

In South Strafford, Vermont, the RIF program sponsored a school-wide Reading Olympics that used the children's interest in sports to motivate reading. For two weeks, everyone in the school—teachers, students, custodians, bus drivers, cooks, etc.—kept track of the number of pages they read by themselves or had read to them. Each day they turned in their scores to their team captains. The school was decorated with a mural of Olympic athletes, a large scoreboard for the teams, and an Olympic flag made by a volunteer.

Photo courtesy of Brown Elementary School, Byron Center, Michigan.

At the end of the Olympics, parents presented medals in an awards ceremony. Following a talk by a local Olympic athlete (who donated a camera bag to the top reader in the school), teams and individuals received medals. In addition to the team winners ("gold", "silver" and "bronze"), individual performances were also recognized: top boy and girl reader in each grade, and the three highest readers in the school. Books with sports themes were featured at this book event.

Coordinator Pat Reynolds, reflecting on the time she donated to the Olympics said:

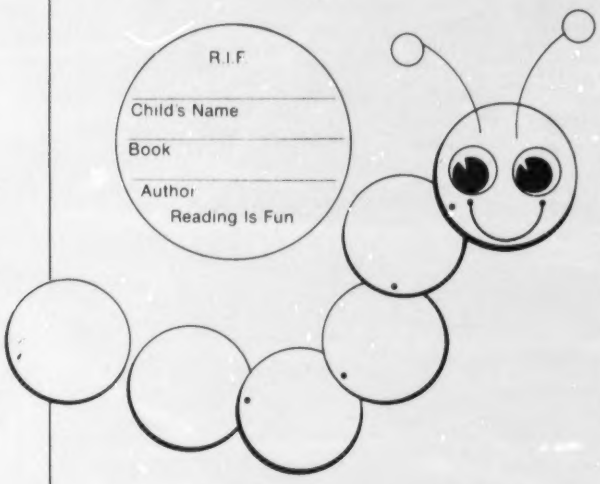
"What did I do? I made the collage of Olympic pictures. I made the medals (over 100!) from cardboard, yarn, ribbon, and spray paint. I helped the team captains with their daily tallying. I contacted the parents and the Olympian to speak. I arranged for a special display of sports books in the library. And I *read* lots of books—but my team still came in third."

Reynolds suggests that you make explicit ground rules at the outset, answering such questions as: Do books have to be at the student's grade level? How about comic books? Should there be other limits to the kinds of books read? To adapt this activity to older children, include some research projects. For example, they might learn about the original Olympic games held in Greece.

Did the Olympics motivate reading? Reynolds thinks so. The increased use of the library, she says, was a sure sign that something special was happening. Teachers, bus drivers, and food service workers all commented on the number of kids discussing the books they'd read. The teams collectively read over 100,000 pages! But there were other, smaller victories. Two boys enrolled in the Title I program helped their team by each reading two books. They were the first books the seventh-graders had ever read.

Progress Markers
To enable children to register their reading accomplishments in a highly visible way, many projects use progress markers, which can be tied in with the theme for the distribution or other book events. Some examples of progress markers used in Reading Is Fundamental programs include:

• **Bookworms:** One school created a large bookworm to decorate the school cafeteria. Body segments were round pieces of paper that read



As children read books (or as kindergarten or first-grade parents read to them), they could add a segment to the bookworm. Each day, new segments were added. As the bookworm reached the exit, everyone knew it was time for the RIF distribution. When children returned to their classrooms following the distribution, they found their desks decorated with an apple and a green pipecleaner worm. And the day after the distribution, the bookworm (or RIF-erpillar) had disappeared—it had been transformed into a beautiful butterfly.

• **Gumball Machine:** Make a large paper gumball machine and place it on a bulletin board in a prominent place. Assign each class a different color. As students read books (or as they read at home for a specified period of time), they can fill out a colored gumball with their name on it. At the end of the contest, the class with the largest number of gumballs on the poster wins a prize—perhaps some real gumballs to celebrate.

• **Under the Big Top:** For a circus theme, make a drawing of a clown. The progress markers can be paper balloons. After children have a specific number of paper balloons on the drawing, they might win a real helium-filled balloon.

• **Turn Over A New Leaf:** In the autumn, hang a large picture of a tree on a wall or a bulletin board. Children can record their progress on multicolored leaves displayed on or beneath the tree.

• **Bookometers and Other Charts:** Other possibilities include a thermometer for each child, with a degree colored in for each book read. Or consider trees with an apple for each book read; houses with paper windows that open outward to reveal the name of books read; ladders with titles of books read on the rungs.

• **Cut the Principal's Tie:** One Colorado principal has found a way to encourage reading and to get rid of his old out-of-style neckties: he cuts one inch off the bottom every time the students in his school read a specific number of books.

***Supershooters**
One Pennsylvania school ran a highly successful Supershooters Basketball Tournament. The entire school was divided into two leagues and each reading class was randomly divided into two teams, one in each league. Each team selected a captain who was responsible for keeping individual box scores as well as team totals. Pupils scored two points for each "basket" (book read) plus an extra point if they wrote a brief summary of the book.

There were four games, each lasting two weeks, followed by a two-week playoff period. The contest included intra-class competition, inter-class competition, and schoolwide competition between teams.

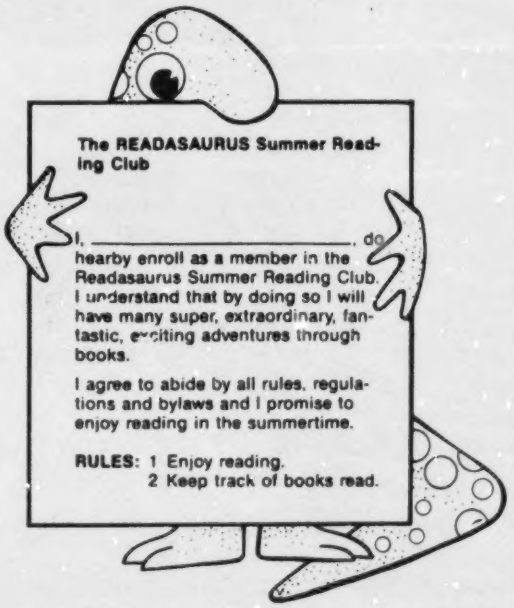
The classroom libraries offered large numbers of books of high interest and appropriate reading levels to the teams. Some of the highest scores were in classes that were below grade level in reading and in the special education class.

At the conclusion of each game, and also at the end of the tournament, winning teams and "Most Valuable Players" were announced over the school's public address system and invited to come to the office to pick up a certificate of award. All pupils who read more than seven books received a prize.

Make Tracks
One school anounced that its mascot, the "Readasaurus," had escaped and asked students to help track him down and recapture him. As students read books, they recorded the title on a cutout of a Readasaurus track. The tracks were displayed throughout the school: on walls, ceilings, and floors. When the tracks reached the Readasaurus' hiding place, the school held a book event. Afterwards, the school capitalized on the excitement by establishing a reading club called the "Order of the

Readasaurus." Students qualified by reading 10 items, including at least five of the following:
A newspaper article
A magazine
A mystery
A book about a famous person
A fairy tale
A book about sports or hobbies
An adventure book
A history book
A fact book—places, plants, etc.

After an adult certified that the books had been completed, students were inducted into the "Order". They received an engraved honor certificate, a free book of their choice, and one ticket to the Readasaurus film festival held in the school. In addition, students who qualified as members of the "Official Readasaurus Superasaurus Fabulousatops Club" (by reading 40 books of


The READASAURUS Summer Reading Club
I, _____, do hearby enroll as a member in the Readasaurus Summer Reading Club. I understand that by doing so I will have many super, extraordinary, fantastic, exciting adventures through books.
I agree to abide by all rules, regulations and bylaws and I promise to enjoy reading in the summertime.
RULES: 1 Enjoy reading.
2 Keep track of books read.

their choice), received a gift certificate from local merchants. (This activity could be coordinated with a unit on dinosaurs or archeology.)

***Beat the Principal**
Set a quota of books that must be read during a given time: two books per month for first-graders, three books per month for second-to sixth-graders. For junior high and high school students, the goal might be four books per month. Record the progress toward goals on a large chart.

As students meet their goal, have them go to the principal's office to read and receive a certificate of accomplishment. At the conclusion of the contest there could be a general prize for all students meeting the goal—a trip to a local rollerskating rink or a movie, for example.

Catch Me Reading
Hold a contest in which students can tell where on the campus they might be "caught" reading. Photograph the most original ideas and display the photos. Samples from one school included reading inside a sousaphone, while hanging upside down from a bar in the gym, while curled up in an empty library shelf.

Secret Codes
Have youngsters examine different kinds of codes, from the very simplest (A = 1, B = 2) to the more complex. Then have them devise their own secret code for sending messages about their favorite books.

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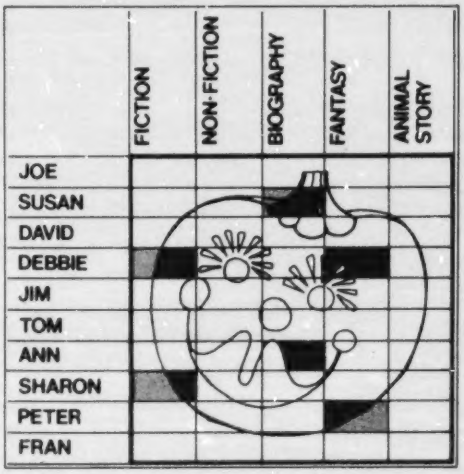


Book Report Picture Grid
Draw a large picture (20 by 30 inches) on grid paper—or hand-grid regular paper. (Hint: use an opaque projector to magnify a picture if you don't have access to a creative artist.)

The picture must pique the curiosity of students and motivate them to cooperate in completing it.

Decide on the categories of books students should read and write the categories across the top of the grid. When a child reads a book from one of the categories, he gets to color in the corresponding grid square across from his name. A variation on this idea would be to cover a large picture completely with construction paper. As students read books, they could *uncover* a portion of the picture.

Book Puns
Older children delight in transforming familiar adages into slogans about books and reading.

Examples:

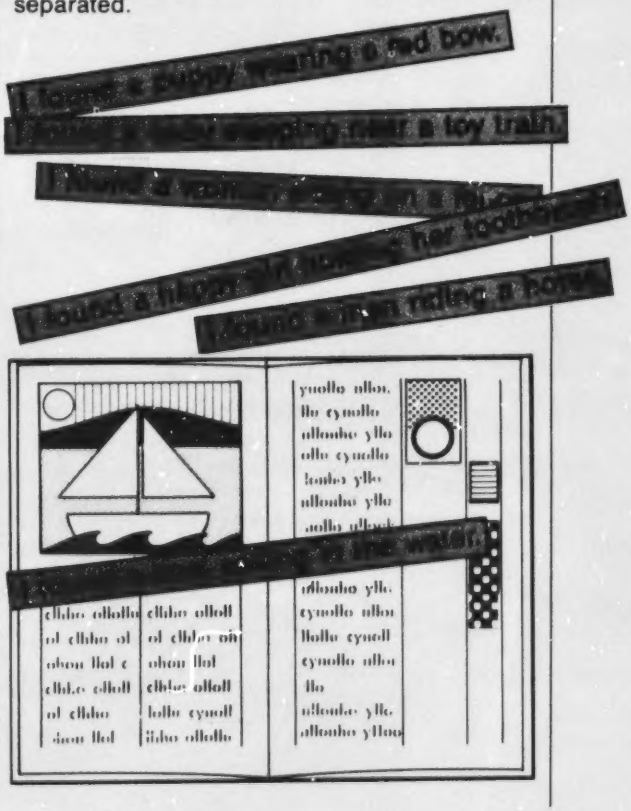
A book a day keeps the blues away!
A book in the hand is worth two on the shelf.
Read when ready.
Have a book and a smile.

Display the slogans on bulletin boards and posters.

Magazine Sentence Strips
Matching sentence strips to pictures, an activity used successfully with hearing impaired children at the Katzenbach School for the Deaf, is one enjoyable way to help youngsters acquire the skill of making educated guesses by searching for contextual clues in their reading.

RIF coordinator Irene Leonardi leafs through issues of magazines looking for interesting pictures. Then she writes 10 sentences, each of which describes a picture and illustrates some principle of language. For example, if the children are learning participles, the sentences could each contain a participle: "I found a man riding a horse," "I found a woman who is wearing eyeglasses." This activity could be used to teach adjectives, or could include more complex sentences for older children.

Copy each sentence onto a strip of tagboard at least one inch longer than the magazine. To keep the strips and the magazine together, tape a card to the front cover of the magazine, leaving only the right side open; strips can be stored in the pocket when not in use. Number the magazine and the sentence strips; this helps if they do become separated.



Students read the strips, then search through the magazine until they find a picture that matches. They insert the strip into the magazine at that page and start with another strip. Of course, sometimes more than one picture will be appropriate for a sentence. When the students have matched all sentences with pictures, the teacher or adult can check their work. Since the strips stick out of the magazine, correcting is easy.

Jigsaw Puzzles
Make jigsaw puzzles from old paperback covers mounted on heavy cardboard and cut into irregular pieces. For older students, you can make "famous quotes" puzzles, too.

Game Corner
Set up a table for commercial reading and word games in the classroom or library, and encourage the children to play the games alone or together in their spare time.

Scrabble Squares
Each player needs a paper and pencil. Make a chart with five squares across and five squares down. The first player calls out a letter of the alphabet. Each player writes that letter anywhere on the chart. The next player calls out another letter and everyone puts it, too, on the chart. The object of the game is to make as many words as possible from the letters, going up and down, or across (as in Scrabble). The game ends when all squares are filled. The player using the most letters to form words wins. You can also play with fewer squares, or allow words on the diagonal. Afterwards, players can exchange their Scrabble squares and search for hidden words.

Can You Guess Your Teacher's Favorite Book?
Teachers in a school found pictures of themselves when they were nearly the same age as the children they taught. On a large piece of paper, they mounted their pictures and a brief description of the books they had enjoyed at that age. All the posters were displayed in the school entryway. Students tried to guess which teacher went with which picture and which book was their favorite. Winners received a prize—an extra book of *their* choosing. Librarians reported that students were especially interested in reading their favorite teachers' favorite books.

Team Word Jumbles
Divide the youngsters into teams, giving each child a large card marked with a single letter. The letters of each team will spell a word. At a signal, all the teams arrange their lettered cards into the proper spelling, and the first correct team wins the point. Try to balance "easy" and "hard" words so no team scores a lopsided victory, and offer prize books to all the spellers.

Character Riddles
On flash cards write clues about characters on one side, names on the other. After the group reads a book together, guess the mystery characters. You can also play this game with individual children by writing clues for the books they keep in classroom libraries or at home

Treasure Hunt
Stage a treasure hunt using the game's usual rules, but let the treasure be books and the clues be reading themes. For example, hide assorted books and tell the children to find the ones that describe jobs. Give points to each team for the books they find and have them label each book with the job it describes. Put the non-job books in a special pile. When all the books are collected, let the children choose among them and allow the winning team a bonus book.

A variation on this is a scavenger hunt, best played in the library. Give each child an envelope with directions for finding five books. Clues might be: find a book about a dog; find a book of fairy tales; find a book for a young child who can't read yet; find a book your father would like; find a book of poems. This game provides a good opportunity to teach the Dewey decimal system and the use of the reference card files.

Inventory
Have the children try to identify 26 different objects in the room, each one beginning with a different letter of the alphabet. Set a time limit and have the children write the name of each object next to the letter. Score one point for each object listed. (A variation on this game is to choose one letter and see who can find the most objects beginning with that letter.)

Rebus
A rebus is a representation of a story in pictures that suggest words and syllables. An example of a rebus: which is decoded as "I saw a cat." Draw a rebus and have the children decode it, either in a group or individually. Or, for older children, have each child or group create a rebus that tells a story.

Question-in-the-Egg
Within hollow plastic eggs (the kind that hold women's stockings), hide riddles, word games (like "Make three compound words that begin with *some*), and general knowledge questions (what is the capital of our state?). Then hide the eggs, either outside or in a room with lots of crannies. As children find the eggs, have them write their answers to the questions on a large sheet or a blackboard, numbered to correspond with the numbers of the questions. Have the children trade questions they cannot answer, and keep some easy ones in reserve for children who are still stumped. Try to see that every child can contribute at least one answer.

Similarity
Cut out pictures from old magazines, and mount them on three-by-five-inch cards. The pictures can be of anything at all, but variety is important. Start by spreading out the pictures face-up on a floor or table. The first player chooses a picture. The next player must find another picture that is in some way similar or related to the first. For example, a picture of a tire could be paired with one of a hula hoop (they are both round), or a windshield wiper (both are parts of a car), or a picture of a road (the tire runs on a road), or a ball (both are made of rubber), or a piece of licorice (both are black and shiny), etc. Players may challenge one another to explain their choices.

Especially for Teenagers

Reading Raffle
During the weeks before a distribution, conduct a reading contest. Have youngsters record their names and books read on cards and place them in a canister. The day before the distribution, names can be drawn for prizes—such as a *Guiness Book of World Records*, a gift certificate from a local fast-food outlet, a free pass to a movie. The more students read, the better their chances of winning.

Debates
Hold debates on current educational issues: Should schools go "back to basics"? Is reading a declining skill in the age of computers? Can television teach? Be sure to publicize the debates.

Book Battle
Sponsor a book battle, modeled on the College Bowl, with preselected book titles as the subject of the competition. Compile five questions on each of three to five books. Give each team one minute to answer each question. Following intraschool competition, each school's winning team can compete for the city championship.

Best Book
Have a book contest in which students give sales talks on books and then the class votes on the best book.

Poster Contest
Conduct a contest for the best poster on books and have the winning entry reproduced by a printer for publicity use.

Billboard Contest
Hold a billboard contest in which each student "advertises" his or her favorite book. Perhaps the winning entry could be displayed on a billboard, courtesy of an outdoor sign company.

Reading Tickets
Following a RIF distribution, youngsters in a Pine Bluff, Arkansas project were given a chance to earn tickets entitling them to several rewards. They could earn a ticket by reading their own books, a book swapped

with a friend or classmate, or any book from the library. After completing the books, students filled out information on the tickets, including their names, the title of the books, and a brief description of the books. Then they talked informally with a teacher, telling about the story and the main characters. Teachers signed the tickets to validate them. Coordinator Pat Reese notes that this gave the students a chance for informal discussions with teachers, without worry about grades. Tickets could purchase:

- items (such as popcorn) from a concession stand set up in a reading teacher's room;
- library time if homework and class assignments were up to date;
- admission to a space-age dance sponsored by the project (the book event had featured a space theme).

Did it work? In a school with an enrollment of 292, over 1,000 tickets were turned in for rewards.

Hall of Fame
Display the pictures of children who have read a specified number of books in a "Readers' Hall of Fame." As a thoughtful gesture, send these pictures to parents, along with a congratulatory letter, after the pictures have been displayed.

Best-Seller List
Ask each child to submit the name of his or her favorite book. A committee can tabulate the results and make up a "best-seller" list for the entire group. Design a special honor certificate, photocopy it, and mail it to the authors of the winning books via their publishers.

Graduate Board
As graduation time approaches, mark older students' reading progress by making them "graduates" of the books they have read. For each book or project completed (such as a written or oral report, a description of a favorite character, etc.) the student posts a diploma in his/her name on the board.

6

Crafts

*Kite Making
*Reading T-Shirts
Reading Suits Me to a "T"
Fairy Tale Castle
*Autograph Pillows
Butterflies Are Free
Stand-up Stories
Diorama
*Mural
Quilt
Super Book
Book People
Book Mobile
Alphabet Soup
Book Buttons
Making Puppets
Reading Place Mats
Flannel Board

Especially for Teenagers

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover
*Bookshelves
*Masks

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

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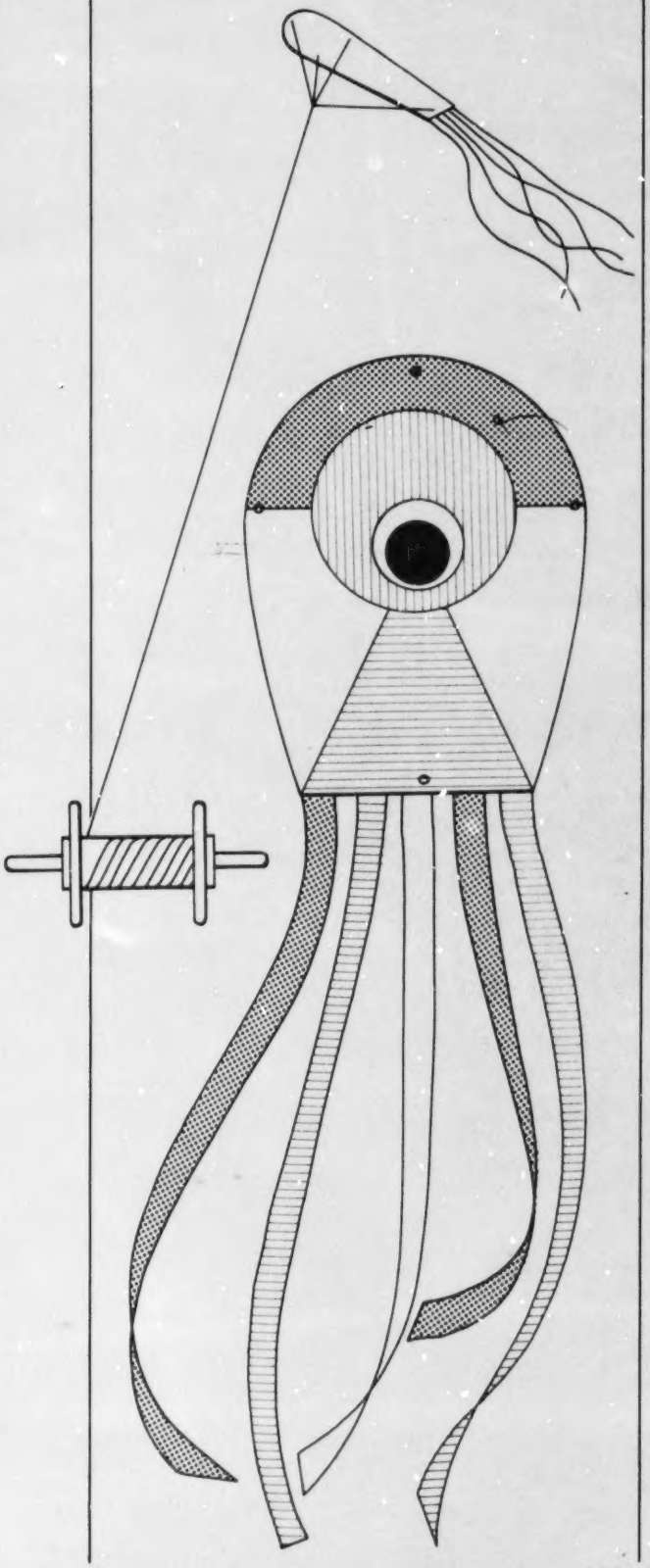


Skill in comprehending how-to manuals is a must for performing in our increasingly technical society. The least painful way for youngsters to acquire this skill may be through the production of handicrafts. If a youngster can become absorbed in building a kite or constructing a puppet, interpreting instructions is not such an unpleasant drag.

Handicrafts are also an excellent way to show some skeptical students that reading is essential—not just for the world of academia, but also for the everyday practical world.

The following are some projects that combine reading skills with handicrafts.

***Kite Making**

If your students have trouble following directions, tell them to go fly a kite. The Trout Lake, Washington, RIF project involved students from grades K–8 in a variety of kite-making projects. Kite making appeals to a wide range of students, both those concerned primarily with performance and construction and those most interested in aesthetics.

A display of kite-making books was set up in the library. Students consulted the books to decide on the design and construction methods they would use. It was a great way to introduce the youngsters to "how to" books and the need for following directions exactly.

Materials needed include wooden sticks, colored tissue paper, tagboard, heavy paper, cellophane tape, string, and mylar, as well as crayons, pencils, and scissors. Also needed: a large area for kite-making—this is one activity that needs space.

Different grades made different kinds of kites. The very youngest children cut a simple shape from tagboard (see illustration). Older students made more complex designs and used a greater variety of materials.

Parent volunteers helped students with their kites; coordinator Laurie Sherburne found that a ratio of about one adult to seven children was best. Some parents got so enthusiastic about the project that they even made kites of their own!

The activity ended, of course, with a kite-flying contest.

Photo by Bob Ellis

***Reading T-Shirts**
If you want to encourage reading, get the youngsters to wear T-shirts with slogans about reading for all the other children to read. That was the idea behind the Mitchell, South Dakota, RIF project's T-shirt design contest.

The idea was simple: Students in each grade developed a reading slogan, winners were picked for each grade, and volunteers silkscreened the winning designs on shirts the students brought to school. The local newspaper publicized the winning slogans.

Coordinator Ray Willard thought it would be a small, short-term project. "We didn't know how many kids would actually want to wear the shirts," he says. "We figured maybe 50 or so—but just to be safe, we ordered enough materials for silkscreening 250 shirts." Over 1100 students showed up with shirts to be silkscreened.

Obviously, the Mitchell project was on to something. Since that time, they have had the three most popular designs commercially printed, and they now sell them to children, using the small profits to support their reading activities. They have advertised in national magazines and have sold the shirts at several regional meetings.

But the greatest reward, of course, is seeing two first-graders wearing shirts that say "Cuddle Up With a Book" as they snuggle into their parents' arms for story time.

Reading Suits Me to a "T"
The Maumee, Ohio, RIF project expanded on the T-shirt idea. Youngsters brought in shirts to be silkscreened, and everyone wore them to a RIF distribution. Following the distribution, as the children read their books, teachers recorded the titles on their T-shirts in waterproof marker. The more books students read, the more titles decorated their shirts. Teachers also hung clotheslines in the halls outside their rooms. Students colored paper T-shirts, wrote their names and the titles of their books, and hung them on the line outside the room. Coordinator David Abbot says that "the kids kept wearing their T-shirts until they wore out or they outgrew them. The following year when we selected a new theme for RIF, the kids still wanted to record the book titles on their T-shirts."

Fairy Tale Castle
Make a large fairy tale castle out of a refrigerator or other appliance box. In the front, cut out a section large enough to display a roll of paper. Have children illustrate their favorite fairy tales on rolls of paper, insert them into the castle, and have a "day at the movies."

***Autograph Pillows**
Have some home economics students—boys and girls—make autograph pillows. Decorate the pillows with an appliqued bookworm. Students can sign the pillows, write the title of their favorite book beneath their names, and use the pillows to sit on while reading.

Butterflies Are Free
After reading a story about butterflies, one teacher in San Diego, California, had the children draw and color their own butterflies. These were hung from coat hangers and suspended from the ceiling in the reading corner.

Stand-Up Stories
Have the children draw and color on pieces of paper five or more scenes telling the story of a favorite book. Be sure all the papers are the same size. Tape the edges together so the sheets are in sequence. Fold back and forth accordion style and stand on end to display.

Diorama
A diorama is a scene made by placing cut-out or three-dimensional figures against a painted background. It can be large (a stage setting) or small (a miniature scene against the back of a shoe box, viewed through a small hole in the box's front panel). The children can cooperate on the production of a large diorama based on a book read together, or representing the scene of a book event; they can also produce individual dioramas for their favorite books.

Have the group collaborate on a mural representing a book they have enjoyed together. Discuss which events and characters they would like to portray, then let each child choose a subject. Assign each child a space on the mural. Murals can be made with crayons, chalk, paint, cut-outs, etc., on wrapping paper, roll paper, or newsprint. When the mural is completed, find space to display it. To increase the visibility of your reading activities, consider asking a local merchant, a shopping center, or your city government to display the mural.

Quilt
Make a reading quilt. Show children pictures of traditional quilting patterns, emphasizing the simplicity in the design. Then give each child a square of fabric and some fabric crayons. Have them decorate the square with a favorite scene or character from a book, and sign and date their square. Volunteers can sew the squares together, add the batting and backing, and quilt.

Super Book
Help the children make an oversized version of a story. With large pieces of heavy cardboard (or even wallboard), make the cover. It should be sturdy and well balanced enough to stand on the floor. On cardboard pages, illustrate scenes from the story, with pertinent sections of narrative copied on the bottom of each page.

Book People
Have each child make a book person to represent his or her favorite book. Use construction paper to reproduce the book's cover. Attach a paper head, arms and legs to the cover torso. Use dialogue balloons to record what each book person is saying about his or her story. Mount the book people around the reading room.

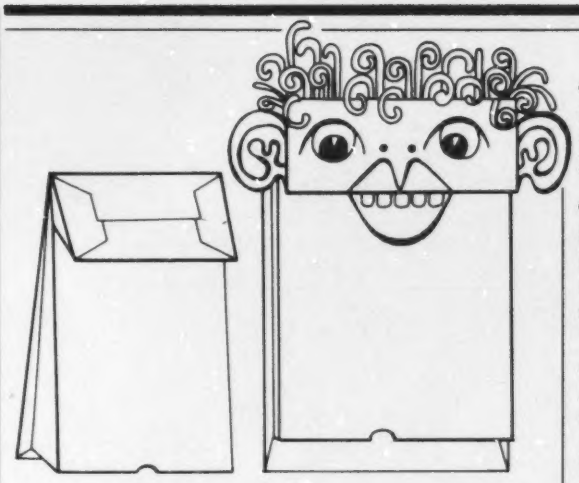
Book Mobile
Have the group cooperate on a mobile of book characters. Each child can draw, color (on both sides) and cut out his or her favorite characters. Construct the mobile from wire hangers arranged in tiers, and attach the characters with string. Let the mobile swing in the breeze.

Alphabet Soup
Give children dark-colored construction paper and uncooked alphabet pasta. Encourage the children to find the letters of their name and/or the title of the book they have selected and glue these letters to the dark-colored paper. Children who are really involved may also look for the names of characters, vocabulary words, and so on.

Book Buttons
Have each student make a button with heavy cardboard and felt pens proclaiming a favorite book slogan: "Books Make Great Friends"; "Have You Hugged Your Book Today?" etc. Glue a pin to the back of each button, or attach a piece of tape that sticks on both sides so the children can wear their buttons.

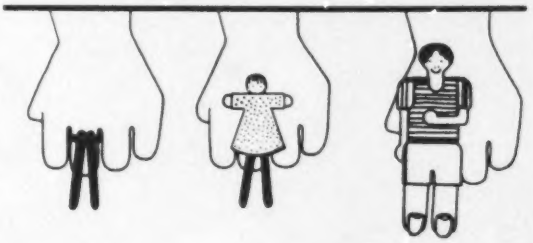
Making Puppets
Making puppets, writing puppet plays, and putting on puppet shows are great ways to encourage reading, speaking, and writing. Here are some simple ideas for making puppets:

- **Stick Puppets:** Draw and color your favorite book character, animal, person, etc. Use stiff paper or cardboard if you want your puppet to stand up straight. Tape a strip of heavy cardboard or an ice cream stick to the back of your puppet for a handle.



• **Paper Bag Puppets:** Flatten a paper bag at the bottom. Draw a face on the flattened bottom. Glue or draw on hair, nose, clothes, etc. Make a mouth at the bottom edge of the bag so that it appears to move when your hand is inside.

• **Finger Puppets:** Wrap a pipe cleaner around your middle finger like a ring, letting the two ends hang down. Pasie a small picture on the twisted part of the pipe cleaner—the two ends become legs. Or move your index and middle finger to make the puppet walk. Another finger puppet can be made by cutting a figure out of heavy paper or cardboard about three inches high, leaving a tab at the bottom with two holes for your fingers. Your fingers become the legs of the puppet.



• **Glove Puppets:** Decorate each finger on an old glove with a different face. Try using yarn for hair, embroidery floss for features, etc.

• **Sock Puppets:** Stuff an old sock with rags. Push a stick or ruler into the puppet and tie it with string or a rubber band. Add a face, hair, eyes, etc., and use like a stick puppet. Or stuff a tissue into the toe of an old sock. Tie it off for the nose. Add the eyes, hair, and ears. Then put your hand in and tuck the heel of the sock under your thumb to make the mouth.

Reading Place Mats

Cut a square—approximately 8 by 10 inches—from a large sheet of construction

paper. In the square, place a copy of a story each child has written. Back the square with a rectangular sheet of construction paper (11 by 17 inches) and trim into an oval. Have the children decorate the construction paper border to match the story, then sign and date the work. Laminate the place mats or cover them with clear, self-sticking paper. A great gift! Older students can write poems on their place mats.

Flannel Board

Have the children make cut-out characters for a number of stories, and glue a small bit of flannel to the back of each character. The flannel will grip the character to the flannel board. Let the children take turns manipulating the characters on the board to tell the stories. This is also a good project for teenagers to perform for younger children.

Especially for Teenagers

Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover
Before this activity, have volunteers pull from the library shelves many fiction and nonfiction books with dull covers. Display these books on the library tables so that students may check out any of these titles—but caution them to browse through the pages to make sure their selections will hold their interest. After they have read the books, have them compose blurbs and create new book jackets appealing enough to make other students want to read the books.

Judges can select winning book covers, which can then be slipped on the books and covered with protective plastic. Other entries can be displayed throughout the school. One school that tried this contest reports that even today, students are still checking out the winning entries; books that might not have seen much circulation because of their drab covers. Students also learned that it's important to look *inside* a book before blindly selecting or rejecting it.

***Bookshelves**
Help the students build a set of bookshelves in their room for sharing books. Perhaps a local building supply store would donate scrap plywood and bricks. Or a more sophisticated version could be constructed with the aid of a shop teacher, a local carpenter, or handy parents. This is also a good project for older students to perform for younger children.

***Masks**
Older students will enjoy researching the origin and use of the mask throughout the ages. Have them collect and display pictures of people wearing masks—ski masks, firemen's masks, Mardi Gras masks, and masks from different cultures. A discussion on why people wear masks and what they mean can be followed by a visit to a mask collection at a local museum, if your community has one. Or ask a fireman to visit the school and explain the construction of a firefighting mask. Then have each student construct a mask of his or her own design.

Primary students can make paper bag masks of their favorite book characters, and parade through the school wearing them.

7 Book Swaps

The Trading Post
Say It with a Paperback (S.W.A.P.)
Brown Bag Books

Especially for Teenagers

Schoolwide Book Swap
Used Book Store
Book Swap Dance

Photo courtesy of *Abilene Reporter News*.

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The book swap, a venerable RIF tradition, is a good multiplier of resources. There are two caveats to keep in mind: First the book swap should be voluntary. Young children, in particular, often love their books too much to part with them. Second, for older youngsters, it's best to specify types of books suitable for trade-ins, unless you have the time to screen out the risqué titles and other inappropriate books that might be donated.

The Trading Post
One principal asked parents to bring to school all the old story books that were gathering dust on their shelves; nearly 500 books were donated. These books formed the foundation of the Trading Post. Each Friday for a half-hour prior to the conclusion of school, the principal becomes a "trader" and the school dining room becomes the trading post. Children bring a book from home, search through the books displayed for one they'd like to read, and trade. Although children can keep the books if they wish, most return them to the school collection after a week or two. After selecting their books, everyone reads silently until the buses arrive.

Say It with a Paperback (S.W.A.P.)
One elementary school library has created an exchange and reading corner. Students bring a book from home, trade it for one of the others available (many of which were originally donated by parents or purchased with money from the library budget), then settle into a bean bag chair to read. Children cooperate in making the exchange a place for special books and not just a dumping ground for rejected books from their home libraries. The librarians say that students enjoy the jumble of books on the table, so they don't bother with organizing them.

Brown Bag Books
Sponsor an occasional "reading brown bag lunch." Have students read a book of their choice prior to the lunch. On brown bag day, they can bring their lunch and perhaps a treat to share with the group to the RIF room. They also bring their book bags—a brown lunch bag with an advertisement for the book (omitting the title) on the outside and the book inside. Youngsters discuss their books in small groups. After they finish, they trade books.

Especially for Teenagers

Schoolwide Book Swap
Twice a year, one junior high asks students to bring in books they're willing to swap. Student body officers man the stations where books are collected and give each participant one ticket for each book donated. During the next week, teachers, PTA members, and student body officers categorize the books. On Swap Day, students in English classes come to the gym, and exchange their tickets for new books. In the school's last book swap 400 students donated 3,671 books. The RIF project coordinator suggests that parents be asked to screen books and send only those suitable for the age group.

Used Book Store
Students can exchange books and gain experience in retailing when they run a school-wide used book store. Older students record the number of books donated by each, alphabetize the names, and run the bookstore on a one-book-in, one-book-out basis. In one school, the 300 children swapped over 1500 books during one month.

Book Swap Dance
One junior high school sponsored an after-school dance. Admission: one paperback book that the student had enjoyed. Books were displayed during the dance (giving those who weren't dancing something to do) and afterwards everyone took home a new paperback. You might include some dances that could include everyone: "Everyone who brought a fiction book find a nonfiction partner."

Easy 8 to Do

Each Day a Bit of Suspense
Project a Story
A Very Young Reader
Choral Stories
A Day at the Movies
Reading Corner
Snuggle Up and Read
*Sustained Silent Reading

Especially for Teenagers

Recommendation Board
Our Own Card Catalogue
Book Review File
Read about Reading
Grade a Book

*Activities adaptable for students of all ages.

Photo courtesy of De Bah Junior Treasurer

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Not all ideas to motivate reading have to involve a lot of planning, take up a lot of time, and involve special props and costumes. All of the ideas in this section are easy to organize and easy to carry out. And best of all, they work.

Each Day a Bit of Suspense
Set three to five books on the ledge of a chalkboard so that all the childen can see them. Tape record a part of one of the stories and play it to the children. Ask students to guess, based on the title and cover of the book, which book they think it was and why. This is a great way to introduce children to a number of books before a book event.

Or start reading a book to the group, but don't finish it. Have students guess the end, write the rest of the story, and compare their endings with the original. Let those who want to finish reading it do so during their independent reading time.

Project a Story
The group can literally read a story together if you print it on transparencies and project it in a darkened room. This might be particularly fun with younger children.

A Very Young Reader
For non-readers enrolled in kindergarten or preschool, free play time can occasionally provide a few minutes to stimulate reading. Set out a number of books on a table before free time. If children congregate around the table, the teacher should give them a chance to leaf through the books. After a few minutes, the teacher can offer to read a book to those interested.

Choral Stories
Read a story with a refrain, and have the children chime in. This is a good way to give preschoolers the feeling that they are helping you "read." Stories such as "Millions of Cats" or "The Little Engine That Could" would be possible choices.

A Day at the Movies
Find two or three short films related to favorite children's books. Pop some popcorn and invite the youngsters to settle in for a pleasant afternoon. The films can be followed by a RIF distribution, a trip to the library, or any other activity centered around books.

Reading Corner
Set up a reading corner where youngsters might go during lunch or other free time to read. Include well-stocked bookshelves and comfortable seating: a couch, an old bathtub full of pillows, or other innovative places to read. (One RIF project used a converted Volkswagon.) The youngsters will appreciate the corner even more if they construct it themselves.

Or arrange a corner just for newspapers and magazine reading. Have the daily editions of local and national newspapers, and plenty of magazines of all types—news and feature, adult and juvenile. Sometimes local book distributors will give away outdated editions of magazines.

Snuggle Up and Read
Students, faculty, and staff at a North Carolina school set aside a week in December to "Snuggle Up With a Book." Each morning everyone went to the Media Center with a favorite book and a stuffed animal or pillow they brought from home. For the next 20 to 30 minutes, everyone escaped into the world of reading, then took up their daily activities.

***Sustained Silent Reading**
(SSR) or by any other name:
DEAR—Drop Everything and Read
RINGO—Reading Is Now Going On
USSR—Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading
RIP—Read in Peace
SQUIRT—Super Quiet Uninterrupted Individual Reading Time.

Some reading experts feel that schools spend too much time *teaching* reading and not enough time letting youngsters *practice* and enjoy reading. Sustained Silent Reading gives them that time.

How does SSR work?

1. No reports are required, no records kept, and no questions asked about what is read.
2. Everyone (including staff) reads for the entire time.
3. No one (including staff) reads a textbook or anything connected with school work. This is not an extra study hall.
4. Establish a regular period for SSR. To be most effective, SSR should take place on a regular basis. In one school, all English classes have SSR on Monday, math classes on Tuesdays, and so on. Others schedule SSR every day before lunch or the last half hour on Friday.
5. Advertise SSR with posters, book displays, etc.
6. Make reading material accessible to everyone. Collect a variety of reading materials—books, magazines, comic books, newspapers, pamphlets—by purchasing them or by asking for donations. Encourage students to bring in material for themselves or to share.
7. Develop SSR guidelines, explain them to the students, put them in writing, and post them in the classroom. Generally, the cardinal rule is "No Talking—not even to ask word meanings."
8. Have students select their reading material *before* the SSR period begins.
9. During the selection period, teachers can share, recommend, and encourage.
10. Invite others—parents, volunteers, anyone visiting the building—to participate in SSR.

Especially for Teenagers

Recommendation Board
Make a large poster or bulletin board labelled "I Think These Are Great Books." Students can list book titles and their names. Adding call numbers if the chart appears in a library will make the books easier for other students to locate.

Our Own Card Catalogue
As youngsters read books, have them fill out a three-by-five-inch card with the title of the book, the author's name, and a few sentences that tell what the book is about. File the cards and keep them for students looking for a book to read.

Book Review File
Maintain files of book reviews. Include reviews by older students, professional journals (like *Horn Book* and *School Library Journal*), trade magazines, and newspapers. Students can practice alphabetizing by filing the reviews.

Read about Reading
Have the group read stories that demonstrate the importance of reading, and then discuss why reading was important to the character, and whether the point applies to their own situations. *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* contains a particularly moving section on learning to read that would be an excellent selection for older students. Check the subject files in the library for other appropriate books.

Grade a Book
Children are usually on the receiving end of the grading process; why not let them give the grades for a change? Make a large chart on which students can record the name of the books they have read, their own names, and letter grades with accompanying comments. A is excellent, B is good, C is average, D not good and E is terrible. Provide space for more than one student to grade each book. At the end of the week or month, the book that receives the best grade is named "Honor Roll Book."

To Do 9 at Home

- Rally 'Round Reading Month
- Parents as Reading Partners
- Letters Home
- Bring Back the Bedtime Story
- 100 + 100 Club
- Super Eager Readers
- Sunflowers
- Read Around the Clock
- No TV Tonight
- Share a Favorite Book

Photo courtesy of Lodi News Sentinel

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Parents are their children's first and most important teachers. Parents who are readers are much more likely to rear children who love books. Obviously, then, motivational activities are most likely to succeed if they include parents.

This section presents a number of ideas for involving parents in your reading program. All of the activities are suitable for children in elementary schools.

Rally 'Round Reading Month
When Minnesota snow blows outside, students in the St. Peter schools are invited to "Warm Up to Reading." As part of Rally 'Round Reading Month, each student is given a bookmark thermometer and a goal of reading for pleasure at least 15 minutes per day. (For younger children, being read to for 15 minutes counts.) Each day, they color their thermometers and record the total reading time.

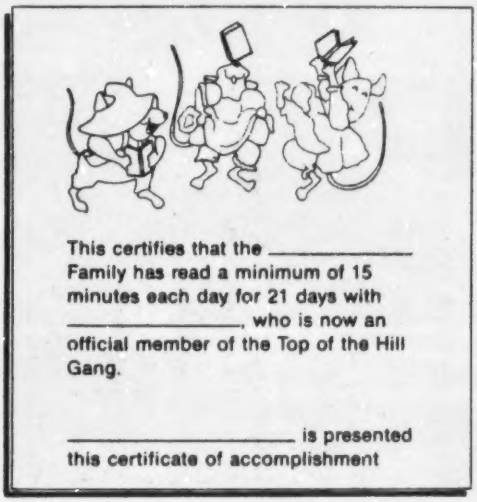
Classes keep a thermometer, marked off in five-hour intervals, outside their doors. School buildings keep large thermometers, and the St. Peter newspaper prints the city-wide total each week.

To prepare parents for their part in this activity, the St. Peter Parents for RIF send home a calendar of activities and a note to each family outlining four things they can do at home:
- Show an interest in the "Reading Warm-up."
- Help find a safe place for the child's bookmark thermometer.
- Help record reading time if necessary.
- Set aside 15 minutes a day when the whole family reads. Find a time when the family can "Turn *off* TV and turn *on* reading!"

Coordinator Anne Erickson has developed three calendars of activities for preschool, primary, and upper elementary grades. These include such simple activities as taking a walk with preschoolers and talking about things they see to more complex tasks, such as finding out something *new* about George Washington on his birthday.

Does it work? In each of the past three years, students have surpassed their reading goal. And while there is no formal evaluation of students' participation with their families, Erickson says that many families expressed particular interest in the "Read in Peace" days, when the family turned off the TV set and read for 20 minutes.

Parents as Reading Partners
New York State Senator James Donovan has launched a program to encourage parents to participate in their children's education. The program is simple: every evening, parents read or listen to their children read for at least 15 minutes. Donovan's office sends out brochures explaining the program (over 360,000 so far). Schools are encouraged to present certificates to families completing the program.


This certifies that the _____ Family has read a minimum of 15 minutes each day for 21 days with _____, who is now an official member of the Top of the Hill Gang.
_____ is presented this certificate of accomplishment

Letters Home
Offer these tips to parents:
1. Have a regular time to read to your child each day.
2. Choose a time without interruptions from television or telephone.
3. Be sure your child can see the words and pictures.
4. Use expression, but don't be too dramatic.
5. Make sure reading time is a fun time.

In a letter to parents, one RIF project suggested some simple activities to help improve their children's reading skills. The letter included these suggestions:
- Have your children read stories to you or to themselves.
- Have your children give a short summary of the stories. Ask questions to check understanding: What happened? Why do you think it went that way? What do you think might happen next? Why? How did the character feel? Have you ever felt that way? What did you do about it? Could this story really happen or is it make-believe? Does this story remind you of another story? In what way?

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Rally 'Round Reading Month

(Pre-school)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Let a prereader color the square each day you read together. **Preschoolers learn language by doing . . . by playing . . . by touching . . . by pretending . . . by reading . . . by talking . . . by sharing time with others,** young and old! Limit T.V. to about 8 hours per week!!					Let your child tell you a favorite story from the pictures. ☐	Talk about colors. Ask for things in the home that are red, green, blue, etc. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Cut comic strips—have your child put pictures in order. ☐	Label things around the house: door, chair, table, etc. **Story Hour* ☐	Play a game. Ask your child to put things **on, under, beside.** **Story Hour* ☐	Let your child see you read **TODAY,** and **EVERY DAY.** *"Little folks see—Little folks do!"* ☐	Make a junk box for things your child finds on walks, trips, etc. *"A Squeeze"* ☐	**WALK** outdoors with your child **TALK** about things you see. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Have your child cut letters out and try to match the ones alike. ☐	Look out a window—talk about the things you see. **Story Hour* ☐	Look out the window again. This time write what your child sees. **Story Hour* ☐	Need a valentine for your child? How about a book? *"A gift that lasts"* ☐	Point out different words on cans and packages. *"A Helper's Hug!"* ☐	As you go for a ride, watch for signs. Read words together. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Help your child write to relatives or friends. ☐	Read to your child. Ask **WHO** and **WHAT** about the stories. **Story Hour* ☐	Use **"circle rectangle or square."** Find things that fit the words. **Story Hour* ☐	Play a guessing game at the night meal. **"Guess what I did today?"** ☐	Let your child help with grocery shopping by finding things on the shelf. ☐	Read poems or nursery rhymes ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Make a list of your child's favorite books or stories. ☐	**Walk with** your child. Use words like *"biggest," "smaller,"* etc. **Story Hour* ☐	Make something in the kitchen together. **Story Hour* ☐	Have your child draw a picture of someone in a book. ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	☐

Rally 'Round Reading Month

(Grades 1–3)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Make an X in the box each day you do an activity listed on the calendar. **R.I.P.**—Read in Peace—Find a quiet place away from any noise!					(20 min) **R.I.P.** Read in Peace! ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	"Make a book button with cardboard and felt pens proclaiming a book slogan. Glue a pin to the back. ☐	Wear your book button to school. ☐	**POETRY DAY** Read aloud! Write some too! ☐	Read to a younger person (or someone in your family) ☐	(20 min) R.I.P. Read in Peace ☐	Find 10 new words around the house. Make a list to share. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	Read about a famous person born in February. ☐	**R.I.P.** (20 min) ☐	Find out something about Valentine's Day. ☐	Tell someone about something you read this week. ☐	Read a recipe. Make something for the family to eat. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	R.I.P. (20 min) ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	Read something to someone in your family ☐	Look at a new book. ☐	Read a story today! ☐	Look for news in the newspaper. Ask someone the new words. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Make a list of books enjoyed by your family. Share at school. ☐	"Cut out words from a newspaper. Use them to write a sentence, a letter, etc. ☐	Listen to a story. ☐	Make a picture for your RIF book. ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	☐

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Make an X in the box each day you do an activity listed on the calendar. **R.I.P.**—Read in Peace—Find a quiet place away from any noise!					What is Groundhog Day? Look it up. ☐	Tell someone about Ground Hog Day! ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Read something in the newspaper. ☐	Langston Hughes—Why is he famous? ☐	**Poetry Day** Read aloud! Write some too! ☐	Read about Charles Dickens. Born 1812 ☐	R.I.P. (20 Min) ☐	Read a newspaper article—share with the family ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Trade a book with a friend. ☐	Look up Abraham Lincoln. Born 1809 ☐	**R.I.P.** 20 Min. ☐	Read a news article. ☐	Read about the gem for February. ☐	Read to someone in your family. ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	R.I.P. (20 Min) ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	Read a recipe—make something for the family. ☐	**RIF DAY** Show your new RIF book to someone. ☐	Find something new about George Washington. ☐	R.I.P. (20 Min.) ☐
Family Day **READ** ☐	Make a list of books enjoyed by members of family. ☐	Who was William Cody? Born 1845 ☐	R.I.P. (20 Min) ☐	Tell someone about a new book. ☐	Bedtime Reading ☐	☐

Rally 'Round Reading Month

(Grades 4–6)

- Perhaps your child could send a short summary to a grandparent, uncle or friend.
- Have your child draw sequential pictures of the story. What happened first, next, last? Why not have your child change the ending of the story?
- Have fun reading together.

Bring Back the Bedtime Story
One RIF project was so inspired by the Reading Is Fundamental "Bring Back the Bedtime Story" public service announcement that they blew the ad up to poster size and made it the focus of an entire distribution. Students were asked to recall their memories of being read to before bedtime when they were younger and were urged to start reading to their own children every day from the time they were three months old. All classes read "Pat the Bunny" and discussed why it is a fine example of a book for very young children. The impact was enormous. They all wanted "Pat the Bunny" at the distribution, of course, but even more important, they took the bedtime story message home. Parents reported being urged by older siblings to read to their younger brothers and sisters.

100 + 100 Club
For a little variety, one school formed the 100 + 100 Club. During the month, students read to an adult for ten 10-minute intervals. They also asked an adult to read to them the same number of times. Families that met these requirements received a certificate of appreciation.

Super Eager Readers
A Minnesota school fostered at-home reading by building on children's love for super heroes. Each student in the school received a Super Eager Reader iron-on transfer for a T-shirt. Students could wear their shirts any time they wished, but all students wore them on RIF distribution day. During the five-week program, students could earn extra iron-on stars for their shirts by reading at home for a specified period—10 minutes per day for grades K–2, 15 minutes per day for grades 3–6. One creative volunteer built a large phone booth in the school entrance. Each week, one "Super Reader" (drawn at random from the list of all those who qualified to receive a star) had his or her picture taken in the phone booth.

Sunflowers
To encourage summer at-home reading, one RIF project gave a packet of sunflower seeds to each child at the last distribution. Also included were growing and planting instructions and a poem that read:

This summer
Plant a sunflower seed
Give it water and sun
Then sit underneath it
and READ FOR FUN.

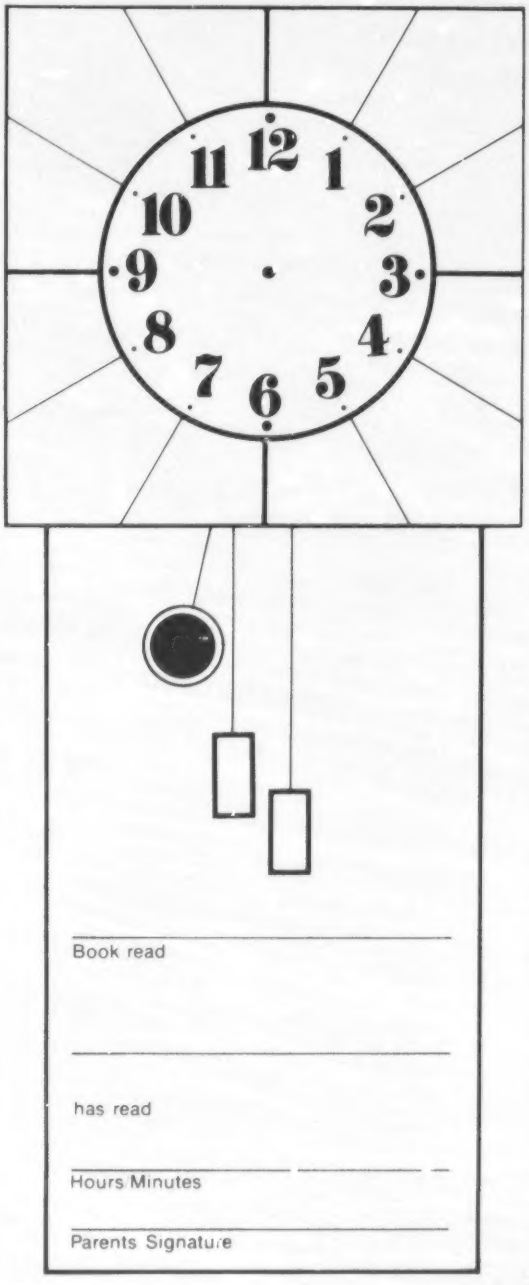
Growing instructions:

How to Plant Your Sunflowers: Sow in rich soil one-half inch deep. Space plants one- and one-half to two inches in rows two inches apart.

How and When to Harvest Your Sunflowers: The plants are ready when the back of the ripe sunflower head is brown and dry. If you want to feed the birds, leave the plants standing in the garden. If you want to save the seeds for yourself, cover the heads with paper bags or cut them off with a foot or two of stem and hang to dry in a shed. When the heads are dry, break out the seeds and store in a jar. Stir once a week to prevent mustiness.

Along with the sunflower seeds, you might pass out a summer reading list. One school called theirs "What to Read After You've Read All the Judy Blume Books." In the fall, children can compare the number of seeds that grew, the height of the tallest plant, the diameter of the center of the largest flower, and—of course—the books they enjoyed reading while sitting in the shade of the sunflowers.

Read around the Clock
One school sent home a large drawing of a clock with each student. As children read for at least 15 minutes, they colored in a segment of the clock and recorded the date and time. As students "read around the clock," they received a certificate honoring their accomplishment.



No TV Tonight
One school selected a night when all families were asked to turn off the television. In a note to parents, the school emphasized that their goal was "not to discourage all TV viewing, but to encourage selectivity in the programs children are permitted to watch." At a school assembly, certificates printed at the school print shop were presented to families who had turned off television for one night—190 certificates were presented in a school with an enrollment of 280.

Share a Favorite Book
Have children share a parent's favorite book. Children can ask parents to name a book they enjoyed when they were the children's age. Children and parents could read the books and talk about them.

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